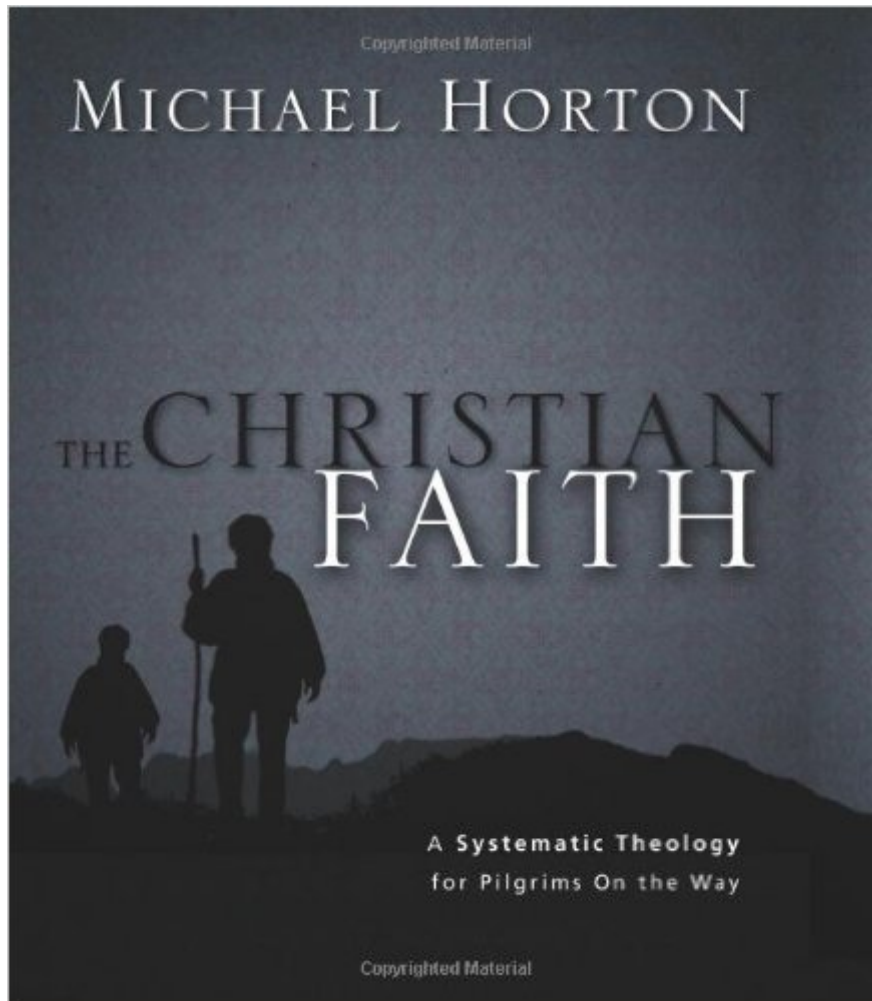


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The Christian Faith: A Systematic Theology For Pilgrims On The Way



Synopsis

Michael Horton's highly anticipated *The Christian Faith* represents his magnum opus and will be viewed as one of the most important systematic theologies since Louis Berkhof wrote his in 1932. A prolific, award-winning author and theologian, Professor Horton views this volume as a doctrine that can be preached, experienced, and lived, as well as understood, clarified, and articulated. It is written for a growing cast of pilgrims making their way together and will be especially welcomed by professors, pastors, students, and armchair theologians. Features of this volume include: (1) a brief synopsis of biblical passages that inform a particular doctrine; (2) surveys of past and current theologies with contemporary emphasis on exegetical, philosophical, practical, and theological questions; (3) substantial interaction with various Christian movements within the Protestant, Catholic, and Orthodoxy traditions, as well as the hermeneutical issues raised by postmodernity; and (4) charts, sidebars, questions for discussion, and an extensive bibliography, divided into different entry levels and topics.

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Customer Reviews

Michael Horton's "The Christian Faith" is a welcome gift to the 21st century. It's a massive (1000 page) one-volume systematic theology that's written with life, passion and the needs of the 21st century in mind. While as an Anglican, I don't necessarily agree with all that Horton writes, I highly recommend his book to a wide variety of readers: seminarians and seminaries, pastors, teachers, and educated laymen. Horton's work is an incredible achievement in that he has taken the worn out discipline of systematic theology and injected it with new life. How has he done this? First, Horton

clearly writes from a position as one who understands the 21st century and the monumental changes we are seeing that are often categorized as the transition from modernity to postmodernity. Horton also draws from a wide range of sources: he not only delves into the historical background to various theological issues but also makes reference to a variety of church traditions, and not just his own Reformed tradition. He also manages to integrate his systematic theology into a living whole by the way he ties everything together through key concepts such as the covenant, Drama, Dogma, Doxology, and Discipleship. This means that Horton's work is useful not just as one more systematic theology but also as a primer in narrative theology, an inspiration to worship, and a resource for all who seek to be more faithful disciples of Jesus Christ. Horton's work has been said by some to be one of the most important systematic theologies since Berkhof's. In fact, Horton's is better than Berkhof's, which is a work that betrays a much more modern mindset that categorizes things without necessarily showing how they all relate.

This work by Michael Horton may be the finest systematic theology since Berkhof's classic which I believe was written in the 1930's. Clear, insightful and what I would call a page turner. It is so full of theological jewels I often found myself excited to turn the page or anxiously wanting to get back to reading it after a short break. Written in a style that is easily reachable even for the common layman, Horton weaves historic, biblical and systematic theology in a way that highlights not only the truth of Scripture but why and how the Christian world-view is necessarily antithetical to pagan and atheistic world-views. Horton has written his text in a manner much different than many systematics. He writes in a style almost like telling a story. His writing style definitely holds the readers attention and is not the dry technical style found in many systematic theologies. Dr. Horton, writes from a consistently reformed and covenantal perspective. That said, the author understands covenant not as a system forced upon the Bible but one that naturally raises from text itself. The Bible is inherently covenantal in that it is God's own record of His own covenant making and keeping redemptive drama from eternity to eternity. Therefore, covenant becomes the motif for properly understanding God's redemptive purpose and the biblical doctrines that reveal it. God's covenants have a goal. Therefore, eschatology is not merely a stand-alone doctrine but the lens through which we read all scripture. Covenant and eschatology become central to our understanding of ontology, epistemology and all of history. The author interacts with past and current philosophies and theologies as he writes, unpacking the doctrines of the Bible in their historical-redemptive setting.

The Christian Faith: A Systematic Theology for Pilgrims On the Way by Michael Horton is not your

average systematic theology. It's not broken up into simple chapters ending in "-ology" like Christology, hamaritology, ecclesiology, and the like. Instead, Michael Horton means to tell a story because the doctrines of Scripture arise out of the drama of Scripture. Or as he puts it, "The Christian faith is, first and foremost, and unfolding drama . . . The great doctrines of the Christian faith arise out of this dramatic plot". For these reasons, *The Christian Faith* isn't primarily a catalog to reference all the topics that make up your typical systematic theology. Rather, Michael Horton tells the story of God, from beginning to end. After an opening section covering the presuppositions of theology called "Knowing God", Horton shapes his systematic theology in a more narrative-like fashion around the following "chapters" of history: 1. God Who Lives 2. God Who Creates 3. God Who Rescues 4. God Who Reigns in Grace 5. God Who Reigns in Glory. The benefit of an approach like this is that *The Christian Faith* doesn't read like a dry systematic theology. Instead, the very words that Horton uses to describe biblical doctrine and theology--words like "drama", "story", and "narrative"--are also perfectly fitting words to describe Horton's book. He also includes a lot of the history of theology, and does so in an equally engaging way. Names like Augustine, Barth, Berkhof, and Schleiermacher need not necessitate a dull read, and Horton soundly makes this point. One caution: this book can be an intimidating read on a few different levels. The size itself (just under 1,000 pages) may keep more than a few from cracking the cover.

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