

# Classic Christianity A Systematic Theology By Thomas C Oden

Classic Christianity A Systematic Theology By Thomas C Oden A Comprehensive Guide to Thomas C Odens Classic Christianity A Systematic Theology Thomas C Odens Classic Christianity A Systematic Theology is a monumental work aiming to recover and articulate a core historically rooted Christian faith This guide provides a thorough exploration of the book offering insights for both casual readers and serious theological students

**I Understanding the Scope and Purpose** Odens work stands in stark contrast to many contemporary theologies which often emphasize individual experience or contemporary cultural relevance over historical orthodoxy His goal is to present a systematic theology rooted in the first five centuries of the Christian church arguing that this period represents a golden age of theological clarity and coherence He doesnt advocate a rigid adherence to ancient practices but proposes a framework for understanding core Christian doctrines through the lens of the early church fathers

**StepbyStep Approach to Reading Oden**

- 1 Start with the Understand Odens overarching argument and methodology He lays out his rationale for recovering classic Christianity and explains his approach to systematic theology
- 2 Focus on a Section at a Time The book is extensive Dont try to devour it all at once Choose a specific section like his treatment of the Trinity or Christology and focus intently on understanding that area
- 3 Consult Secondary Sources Oden references numerous early church fathers and theologians Looking up these sources even briefly can enhance your understanding and provide context
- 4 Engage in Dialogue Discuss the material with others Join a book club engage in online forums or talk with your pastor or theological mentor This will help you grapple with complex concepts and refine your own understanding
- 5 Reflect on the Implications Consider how Odens arguments relate to your own faith and practice How does his systematic approach challenge or affirm your existing beliefs

**2 II Key Theological Themes Explored by Oden** Oden meticulously addresses key theological themes within a historical framework These include

- The Trinity** Oden emphasizes the classical understanding of the Trinity God as Father Son and Holy Spirit drawing heavily on patristic sources to establish its biblical and historical basis He contrasts this with modern interpretations that he sees as diminishing the distinctiveness of each person of the Trinity
- Christology** He explores the nature of Christ highlighting the crucial concepts of the hypostatic union the perfect union of divine and human natures in Christ and kenosis the selfemptying of Christ He stresses the importance of understanding Christs full humanity and divinity
- Soteriology** Odens approach to salvation emphasizes the atoning work of Christ on the cross focusing on the early church understanding of redemption as a rescue from the power of sin and death He explores the role of grace and faith in salvation
- Pneumatology** The work of the Holy Spirit is another central theme emphasized as the active presence and power of God in the world and in the lives of believers He connects this to the early churchs

understanding of spiritual gifts and the ongoing work of the Spirit in the church

**Ecclesiology** Odens treatment of the church emphasizes its historical continuity and its role as the body of Christ He stresses the importance of the sacraments particularly baptism and the Eucharist as central to Christian life and practice

**III Best Practices and Common Pitfalls**

**Best Practices** Read with a critical eye While appreciating Odens scholarship dont accept everything uncritically Engage with his arguments considering alternative viewpoints and potential weaknesses Contextualize the Material Remember that Oden draws from a specific historical period Understand the historical context of the sources he utilizes to fully grasp his arguments Connect with Contemporary Issues Though rooted in the past Odens work has significant implications for contemporary theological debates Reflect on how his framework can address current challenges facing the church

**Common Pitfalls** Blind adherence to tradition Avoid interpreting Odens work as advocating a return to a simplistic past He seeks a recovery of essential truths not a rejection of all subsequent developments Ignoring contemporary contexts While appreciating historical orthodoxy dont neglect the importance of engaging with contemporary issues and interpreting scripture within current cultural contexts Overlooking diversity within the early church The early church was not monolithic Acknowledge the diversity of theological views and practices present even within the patristic era

**IV Examples from the Book** Odens treatment of the Eucharist for instance isnt simply a historical recitation He connects the early churchs understanding of the sacrament with the ongoing significance of communal worship and the real presence of Christ Similarly his discussion of Christs atonement doesnt simply repeat established formulas but uses patristic insights to enrich the understanding of substitutionary atonement within a broader framework of Gods love and grace

**V Summary** Classic Christianity is a comprehensive and challenging work Odens attempt to recover the historical core of Christian faith offers a valuable corrective to some contemporary theological trends While demanding careful study it provides a rich and nuanced understanding of Christian doctrine firmly grounded in the writings of the early church fathers

**VI FAQs**

**1** Is this book suitable for beginners in theology While accessible in its writing style the depth and breadth of the material make it more suitable for those with some prior theological background Beginners might benefit from starting with introductory texts before tackling Odens work

**2** How does Odens approach differ from other systematic theologies Odens emphasis on the early church fathers differentiates it significantly Many contemporary systematic theologies prioritize modern philosophical or theological movements while Oden roots his system in historical orthodoxy

**3** What are the criticisms leveled against Odens work Some critics argue that his focus on the patristic era is overly selective overlooking important developments and diverse perspectives within the history of Christianity Others contend that his approach can lead to a form of historical literalism neglecting the ongoing interpretive work necessary for engaging scripture

**4** How can I practically apply Odens theology in my daily life Odens emphasis on the Trinity Christs life death and resurrection and the work of the Holy Spirit should inform all areas of life This includes prayer worship ethical decisionmaking and engagement with the community

**5** What are some other books that complement Odens work To gain a broader perspective readers might consider exploring works by the early church fathers themselves eg Augustine Irenaeus Athanasius and contemporary theologians

who engage with patristic thought Studying the historical development of key doctrines can further illuminate Odens arguments

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this vigorous and incisive critique of modernity lights the path to recovering the revitalizing heritage of classical christianity

for the first time thomas oden s systematic theology classic series individually titled the living god the word of life and life in the spirit is available in one complete volume a renowned theologian oden provides a consensus view of the christian faith delving deeply into ancient christian tradition and bringing to the contemporary church the best wisdom from its past in this magisterial work oden tackles the central questions of christian belief and the nature of the trinity written for clergy christian educators religious scholars and lay readers alike classic christianity provides the best synthesis of the whole history of christian thought part one explores the most intriguing questions of the study of god does god exist does jesus reveal god is god personal compassionate free and presents answers that reflect the broad consensus culled from the breadth of the church s teachers it is rooted deeply and deliberately in scripture but confronts the contemporary mind with the vitality of the christian tradition part two addresses the perplexing christological issues of whether god became flesh whether god became christ and whether christ is the source of salvation oden details the core beliefs concerning jesus christ that have been handed down for the last two hundred decades namely who he was what he did and what that means for us today part three examines how the work of god in creation and redemption is being brought to

consummation by the holy spirit in persons through communities and in the fullness of human destiny oden's magisterial study not only treats the traditional elements of systematical theology but also highlights the foundational exegeses throughout history covering the ecumenical councils and early synods the great teachers of the eastern church tradition including athanasius and john chrysostom and the prominent western figures such as augustine ambrose thomas aquinas martin luther and john calvin this book offers the reader the fullest understanding of the christian faith available

emphasizing the beliefs common to all branches of christendom rather than the issues that divide thomas oden brings the full weight of two millennia of discussion to bear on the ever contemporary questions of christian faith his magisterial study not only treats the traditional elements of systematic theology referencing hundreds of theologians protestant catholic orthodox charismatic but also highlights the foundational exegeses of history broadly ecumenical in the truest sense of the word and written from the perspective of a theological liberal turned evangelical oden's direct frank and provocative approach articulates the concerns of a broad spectrum of christians pastors teachers seminarians and thoughtful laity though comprehensive in scope the set is arranged in a trinitarian fashion with each volume focusing on one person of the godhead the first volume explores the christian understanding of god creation and providence the second volume discusses christ and the incarnation the third volume considers the presence of the holy spirit in history and his power in the lives and communities of present day believers volume 1 the living god isbn 9781598560374 volume 2 the word of life isbn 9781598560381 volume 3 life in the spirit isbn 9781598560398 these volumes may be purchased separately demonstrates a commitment of faithfulness to the scriptural teachings concerning jesus and a rich appreciation for the classical and conciliar traditions of christology preaching oden's project is anti trendiness with a vengeance refreshingly bold first things the most impressive systematic exercise in ecumenical consensual thinking in print religious studies review a welcome addition to the pastor's bookshelf and a needed voice in the contemporary theological conversation interpretation

life in the spirit is the third volume of thomas oden's systematic theology it considers the presence of the holy spirit in history and his power in the lives and communities of present day believers

in this inspiring devotional commentary from our ancient church fathers accompanies weekly scripture readings following cycle a of the revised common lectionary cindy crosby and thomas c oden also provide brief biographies of the church fathers

how did one of last century's most celebrated liberals change so dramatically in this intellectual and spiritual memoir thomas oden journeys from conservative rural methodism in oklahoma to free spirited theological innovation in the land of academia and back to the foundations of ancient christianity

this much needed book fully integrates principles of pastoral care leadership and theology to restore to ministers a clearly defined pastoral identity moving from a

critique of inadequate models for ministry from community organizer to t v evangelist oden develops a more classical model rich in its references to the past and compatible both with christian faith and theology through the ages and with current needs reconciling classical tradition with practice pastoral theology will be a standard resource and reference in the field oden distills the best ideas of the two millennia of ecumenical christian thinking concerning what pastors are and do pastoral theology provides the foundational knowledge of the pastoral office requisite to the practice of ministry it will be of interest to persons preparing for ordination in its review of key issues at the same time pastoral theology will appeal to all those who have considered entering the ministry those who want to know more about what clergy do and why and those ministers who want to review their ongoing work in the light of a systematic reflection on the pastoral gifts and tasks

classic pastoral care provides a topical arrangement of passages from classic christian writings offering guidance on all major topics of pastoral theology the four volume set features writings from more than two hundred notable christian authors from abelard and ambrose to isaac watts and zwingli arranged in thirty topical sections volume two ministry through word and sacrament reviews the range of pastoral tasks pastoral care through preaching and worship pastoral care through the ministries of baptism and eucharist the pastor as educator of the soul the teaching office the office of administry i e of that which moves toward ministry and the nurturing of christian community in mission to the world

how did one of last century s most celebrated liberals change so dramatically in this intellectual and spiritual memoir thomas oden journeys from conservative rural methodism in oklahoma to free spirited theological innovation in the land of academia and back to the foundations of ancient christianity

thomas oden provides a modern commentary on the pastoral letters grounded in the classical consensual tradition of interpretation oden uses the best and most accurate research concerning the historical literary and philological aspects of the pastoral letters he addresses tough issues the role of women in worship problems of the rich and poor the relation between servants and masters policies concerning support of elderly widows and how to handle church disruptions

a follow up to the previous ancient christian devotional which follows lectionary cycle a this devotional guide follows lectionary cycle c which begins in advent 2009 this guide to prayer and reflection combines excerpts from the writings of the church fathers as found in the ancient christian commentary on scripture with a simple structure for daily or weekly reading and prayer

in the translator s introduction to this volume james kellerman relates the following story as thomas aquinas was approaching paris a fellow traveler pointed out the lovely buildings gracing that city aquinas was impressed to be sure but he sighed and stated that he would rather have the complete incomplete commentary on matthew than to be mayor of paris itself thomas s affection for the work attests its great popularity

during the middle ages despite its significant missing parts everything beyond the end of matthew 25 with further gaps of matthew 8 11 10 15 and 13 14 18 35 although there are gaps what remains is quite lengthy so much so that we offer the work in two volumes comprising fifty four homilies while the early fifth century author displays a few arian propensities in a handful of passages for the most part the commentary is moral in nature and therefore orthodox and generic the unknown author who for several centuries was thought to be john chrysostom follows the allegorizing method of the alexandrians but not by overlooking the literal meaning his passion above all is to set forth the meaning of matthew s gospel for his readers here for the first time this ancient work is made available in english ably translated by james a kellerman and edited by thomas c oden ancient christian texts are new english translations of full length commentaries or sermon series from ancient christian authors that allow you to study key writings of the early church fathers in a fresh way

we often regard the author of the gospel of mark as an obscure figure about whom we know little many would be surprised to learn how much fuller a picture of mark exists within widespread african tradition tradition that holds that mark himself was from north africa that he founded the church in alexandria that he was an eyewitness to the last supper and pentecost that he was related not only to barnabas but to peter as well and accompanied him on many of his travels in this provocative reassessment of early church tradition thomas c oden begins with the palette of new testament evidence and adds to it the range of colors from traditional african sources including synaxaries compilations of short biographies of saints to be read on feast days archaeological sites non western historical documents and ancient churches the result is a fresh and illuminating portrait of mark one that is deeply rooted in african memory and seldom viewed appreciatively in the west

my basic purpose is to set forth an ordered view of the faith of the christian community upon which there has generally been substantial agreement between the traditions of east and west including catholic protestant and orthodox my purpose is not to present the views of a particular branch of modern christian teaching such as roman catholic or baptist or episcopal rather it is to listen single mindedly for the voice of that deeper ecumenical consensus that has been gratefully celebrated as received teaching by believers of vastly different cultural settings whether african or european eastern or western sixth or sixteenth century preface

how is it possible to hold a new testament ethic to love one s enemies and pray for their physical infliction shame death and suffering of family members and yet the psalter the prayer book of the church contains such prayers in modern times the church has adopted a semi marcionite attitude towards these troubling texts excluding whole psalms or parts from liturgies and private use but as the age of terror dawns upon us we are finding that these texts speak of unchanging realities that perhaps the ancients were abler to understand than moderns two great wars and a multitude of ideologies proved in the last century that the intellect cannot prevent these irrational impulses of destruction and post modern societies of the present century with their multitude of voices really offer no voice to counter moral evil this study of six psalms with graphic

language of enmity seeks to help the reader overcome shallow views of the mystery of evil cultural blinkers of the use of language and even personal prejudices it attempts to recover the complete prayer book of the church as it once was israel s prayer book

despite political persecution economic stalemate and military intimidation this book shows how churches of all denominations continue to grow under the stimulus of vibrant indigenous spirituality and cultural idioms incorporating interviews with christians from six of the most influential churches in lagos this book gives readers a sense of daily life in lagos for christians through this original ethnographic research caleb o oladipo explores first hand accounts of faith and practice in the city offering a unique perspective to scholars of global christianity a collection of stories from christians of diverse ethnographic backgrounds this book shows that christianity is an integral part of the rhythm of life in lagos christians in lagos one of the most populous cities in the world are dynamic with a confluence of traditions beliefs and community

this unique thirty volume series from general editor thomas c oden now in paperback for the first time offers you the opportunity to study for yourself key writings of the early church fathers arranged canonically and employing the rsv each volume allows the living voices of the church in its formative centuries to speak as they engage the sacred page of scripture

in this manifesto of sorts bishop emilio alvarez introduces the phenomenon of pentecostals returning to the ancient creedal christian faith and extends the project of paleo orthodox ressourcement to include orthodox expressions within pentecostalism particularly in his own afro latino pentecostal movement

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