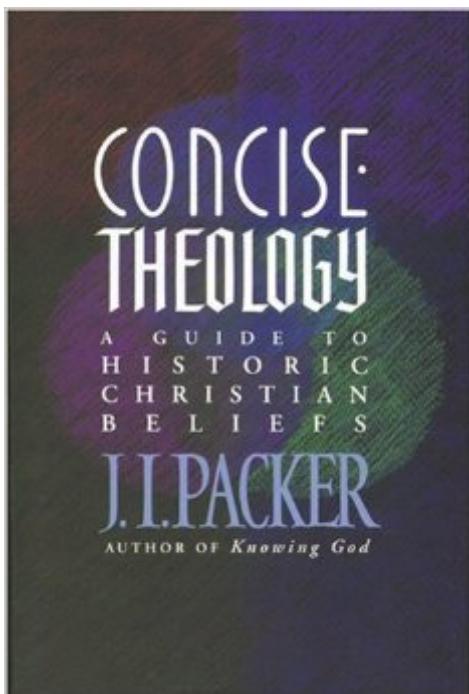


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Concise Theology: A Guide To Historic Christian Beliefs



Synopsis

This summary of Christian teaching covers nearly 100 major theological points from a biblical Reformed perspective. Brief, easy-to-understand chapters offer precise descriptions without sacrificing depth.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

This book is well suited for individual or small group study (I have done both). It has about 90 short chapters (2-4 pages each) of essential Christian doctrines, and is written from a Reformed perspective. Packer's writing style is straightforward, concise, and intended to be read by anyone. He includes numerous scripture references to support each of the doctrines, and I have found it useful to read a chapter and then spend up to an hour reading all of the related scripture references. Sample topics include: Revelation (Scripture is the Word of God), Predestination (God has a purpose), Trinity (God is one and three), Holiness (God is Light), Conscience (God teaches and cleanses the heart), Incarnation, Virgin Birth, Repentance, Elders, Lord's Supper, Marriage, the Family, Second Coming, Heaven, Hell and many others. Again, each chapter emphasizes why the doctrine is important for us to know - e.g., what difference it should make in our life. This book is wonderful for strengthening your faith and beliefs - helping you know why you believe what you believe, always based on the Bible. May God bless you through this work as much as He has blessed me.....

J.I. Packer, who wrote such essential works as "Knowing God" and "Evangelism and the Sovereignty of God", is wonderfully qualified to bring us this special little (267 pages) book, which in the words of Westminster Seminary professor Sinclair B. Ferguson "will serve equally well as an introduction to doctrine, a manual of theological terms, or a devotional study" (to which one might only add that it serves as a wonderful text for a group study as well). The book is divided into 4 main sections, specifically "God Revealed as Creator," "God Revealed as Redeemer," "God Revealed as Lord of Grace," and "God Revealed as Lord of Destiny." These broad divisions are then subdivided into almost 100 short (2-4 pages) chapters, with topics ranging from "The Fall" to "The State". Not exactly a catechism, it is excellent medicine for a catechism-starved world, where vast numbers of Christians would have enormous difficulty even defining many of the most basic terms -- not to mention the most essential doctrines -- of our faith. Finally, for those unfamiliar with Packer, he is Professor of Theology at Regent College in Vancouver, British Columbia, and a senior editor of Christianity Today. He holds the D.Phil. from Oxford University, and is one of the world's most prominent Reformed theologians.

Many people like to pick up a book, read a couple of pages, and think about it. While upholding all of the wonderful things said in previous reviews, I would also like to add that this book is perfect for those who enjoy short readings. All of the major doctrines of the Christian faith are summarized and excellently presented in small chapters or sections of just a few pages. I went through this book in about a year and fully enjoyed it. In my opinion this book treats much of the same material found in "Knowing God" but in a more didactic, outlined manner. It is also a great quick reference of cardinal doctrinal points. It is condensed truth.

Concise Theology by J.I. Packer could be considered a miniature systematic theology. The four general sections of the book are set forth as follows:(1) God Revealed as Creator(2) God Revealed as Redeemer(3) God Revealed as Lord of Grace(4) God Revealed as Lord of DestinyEach section contains a short, but extremely pointed summary of a particular doctrine. The book is not designed to be a comprehensive systematic theology. Rather it is written with the layman in mind who has a desire to learn doctrinal truth or may not have the time to devote to a larger work. The precision with which this book is written may encourage readers to study further in a given area.J.I. Packer continues to write in a way that many have grown to love and expect. Three basic strengths must be noted. First, the author emphasizes the greatness and majesty of God. Packer emphasizes that "theology is for doxology." He writes, "The truest expression of trust in a great God will always be

worship, and it will always be proper worship to praise God for being far greater than we can know." Second, Concise Theology is a superb introduction to Reformed thought. Yet the author does not "wear his theology on his sleeve." This work may appeal to a broad range of people who otherwise may be reluctant to study Reformed theology. Finally, the most controversial points of Reformed theology are dealt with in an honest and forthright manner. The most engaging essays include Packer's discussion on particular redemption, the enslaved will, effectual calling, and the constitution of man. The church owes a tremendous debt to Dr. Packer's faithful ministry over the years. May his tribe increase!

I read Concise Theology several years ago to help me understand basic theology as I studied Scripture and other materials. I used it as a tool to help in whatever study I was involved in at the time. However, not until I used it as a devotional study: taking a section and reading it through, then going back to highlight the major points, next going through the section again to read all the scriptures referenced, and finally going through a final time asking the Spirit to make what I had just studied mine. What a joy this study has been! The Spirit has made these doctrines (this theology) more clear to me than ever before. My eyes were opened! This has been the most exciting devotional Bible study I have done!

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