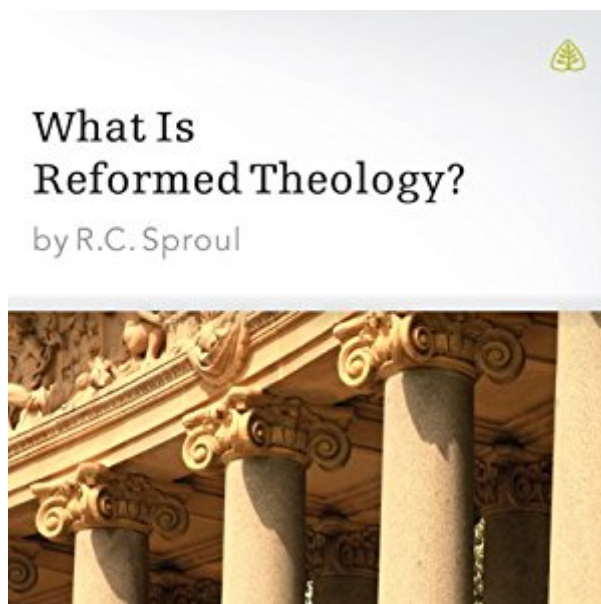


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What Is Reformed Theology?



Synopsis

In this series, Dr. Sproul offers an introduction to Reformed theology, the heart of historical evangelicalism.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Growing up in a Baptist church, I knew very little about Reformed theology. When I started attending a "Reformed" church my only concern was how dogmatically they might teach Calvinism- which in my mind had something to do with TULIP and God forcing people to believe in Him. I have no doubt that many others have seen Reformed theology in a similar light. In *What is Reformed Theology?* Dr. R.C. Sproul attempts to distill the doctrines of the reformers into a simple and accessible format, and correct many of the misunderstandings many of us have had of it. Dr. Sproul begins in the introduction affirming that what is being discussed is not a Reformed religion, but more appropriately Reformed theology. It is "not merely a religion without theology. It is driven first and foremost by its understanding of the character of God." (20) The book is divided into two parts. The first consists of five chapters on the foundations of Reformed theology- 1) Centered on God 2) Based on God's Word Alone 3) Committed to Faith Alone 4) Devoted to Prophet, Priest, and King 5) Nicknamed Covenant Theology. Part two is Dr. Sproul's explanation of what is commonly known as TULIP- 6) Humanity's Radical Corruption 7) God's Sovereign Choice 8) Christ's Purposeful Atonement 9) The Spirit's Effective Call 10) God's Preservation of the Saints. Throughout the book Dr. Sproul draws Reformed theology up against Roman Catholicism and Pelagius, periodically against

Dispensationalism, and at a couple of points against Lutheranism. This is often helpful in order to more fully understand the Reformed position, but I suspect at some points the opposing views are short changed and dismissed without a fair hearing. This is not a book defending Reformed theology.

Most Christians have heard of Reformed theology. Most think they have a good handle on it. But experience has shown me that few really know it as well as they think they do. And that goes for people who claim to be Reformed as much as those who do not. This cannot be said of R.C. Sproul. Not only does Sproul have an amazingly broad but detailed grasp of Reformed theology, but he has also been gifted with the ability to explain complex theology in a way that is both interesting and understandable. That is no common gift. *What Is Reformed Theology?*, which was formerly published under the more obscure title *Grace Unknown*, is Sproul's attempt to help others understand the basics of Reformed theology. Surprisingly, only fifty percent of the book is dedicated to a discussion of the Five Points. The first half provides the foundations for Reformed theology which so many similar books have overlooked. Without first understanding the foundations, the reader will have a much more difficult time understanding the Five Points. And so Sproul begins by discussing God's sovereignty; the importance of Scripture as the only infallible rule for our faith; faith alone; Christ's threefold office of Prophet, Priest and King; and Covenant Theology. Each of these is explained in detail, yet with sufficient precision that they are simple enough to understand. The second half of the book is an examination of the Five Points of Calvinism: Total Depravity, Unconditional Election, Limited Atonement, Irresistible Grace and Perseverance of the Saints. Like many other theologians, Sproul has come to see that this acrostic, while helpful, does as much to obscure the points as it does to clarify them.

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