

Why do we need a consistent theology?

Heresies don't simply teach wrong doctrine, they are inconsistent. Some are inconsistent even within their own system; all are inconsistent with the Bible and many are inconsistent with their own doctrine of God. For instance: Amyraldism teaches that God has two wills that contradict each other. Free Offer preachers claim that God desires the salvation of all men but privately believe that only the elect will be saved. Arminian teaching contradicts many of the attributes of God, such as his immutability (changelessness) & perfection.

Many heretical systems claim to be Biblical and use false methods of interpretation to make the Bible teach what they want. Supposedly evangelical heresies are no different in this to Christian Scientists or Christadelphians. It is not enough to claim to be Biblical but we must be consistent with the doctrine of the whole Bible. Furthermore, we must specifically be consistent with the doctrine of God, the bedrock of Biblical theology. It is of first importance that believers have a clear, even if basic, understanding of God's attributes if they are going to be consistent. If we do not know who God is, then we will not understand his teaching properly; the basic meaning of 'theology' is the study of God, and we read the Bible to develop knowledge of his perfections.

If our doctrines are really Biblical, they will be consistent with the doctrine of God; if we contradict an attribute of God in our teaching, then it cannot be correct. Thus it is essential to gain certain basic details about God in order to arrange our thinking about doctrines. For instance: if God is sovereign in salvation then our teaching on salvation must comply with this or it will be false. If God never changes, then our interpretation of passages which appear to teach that he changes his mind must be consistent with that attribute. When faced with difficult passages, our fundamental understanding of God's attributes must dominate our interpretation. Thus we cannot expound Jer 18:8-10 to mean that God changes his mind (especially when Jer 4:28 says the opposite); we must carefully study to discover what is really being said.

When faced with a problem we cannot resolve at this point in time, we should submit to God and wait until we do understand it. It would be sin to explain a passage in a way that contradicts what we know for certain about God, just because it seems to say such and such. Those who are obedient and faithful will know the truth in time if they submit and wait. Those who use their human rationality without submission and make false interpretations will find that they slide in understanding generally. We must be consistent. Interpretations that are at odds with the doctrine of God will always lead to ruin.

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