

# How to Put the Bible Puzzle Together Using Systematic Theology<sup>©</sup>

Systematic Theology is a devised sequential system that accurately and completely organizes all divine truth into individual sub-topics. It is a system by which every concept revealed by the Bible is ordered as to its meaning, purpose, logic and relation to all other divinely revealed truth in Scripture and in nature.

Because God's truth is eternal; because the subject of the Bible is the infinite God and His Creation; because the Bible reveals the mind of God, no cursory or haphazard reading or study of the Bible does it justice. The wise Bible student does well to approach their study of God's Word in a manner that will, over time, reap them reward in heaven and will benefit their reliable use of God's Word on earth. This can be accomplished effectively by study of systematic theology and then applying that study to daily Bible reading.

Until a Bible student determines to cast off the naive notion that all they must do to accurately handle<sup>1</sup> God's Word is pick it up and read it, they'll not make any progress in answering the many questions that honest Bible study engenders. The Bible is meant to answer questions man has about:

his Creator and all He's created, including His redemptive plan  
his purpose and responsibility in this life  
God's criteria for eternal disposition of His Creation.

Learning to approach divinely revealed truth through systematic study rather than piecemeal or devotional reading is a responsibility and a privilege of every child of God.

Systematic Theology is the "queen of sciences" as agreed for centuries by many great minds. Systematic theology answers questions that must be answered **before** other scientific questions can be effectively asked and answered. (Surely, this explains why evolution-based and/or agnostic / atheistic 'scientists' are unconvincing in their arguments. They don't have the basics down of **science's Creator**. Therefore, they **don't really have an accurate understanding of science**.)

A graphic illustration convinces of the value of systematic study of theology. Whether the reader is a fan of piecing together jig saw puzzles, the suggested imagery will be most instructive. Imagine a 5,000 piece jig saw puzzle. Puzzles with this number of pieces are rare. But the overwhelming number of pieces serves to demonstrate that infinite points of truth connect to form our comprehension of the God of the Bible and His written revelation for us. Imagine that you have one of these mind boggling puzzles and you think to ask yourself before you dump the pieces on a table, "What is the way to tackle this

---

<sup>1</sup> Right division is revealed in 2 Tim 2:15. Simply put, it means discarding haphazard for accurate handling.

job so that I will actually finish the puzzle in as short a time as possible in order to enjoy the final picture when I'm finished?" (It is accepted there are possibly as many ways to assemble a jig saw puzzle as there are persons who might attempt the task.) But if one qualifies the question by adding, "What is **the most effective way** to tackle the job so that a puzzle maverick can pass on to someone else the best system to assemble their own giant puzzle?", then the question becomes one of analyzing the task to best determine how to proceed.

So, instead of avoiding the obvious virtue of this question, claiming it is possible to simply dump the puzzle pieces out and randomly select pieces to test their fit, and eventually arrive at a completed puzzle, let's agree there are many ineffective ways to approach Bible study but not very many effective ways. The same is modeled for us in this jig saw puzzle analogy. Whenever you open a new jig saw puzzle the best system that produces low frustration results with a finished puzzle in the shortest time is the system that **follows this order of steps**:

1. On sufficient flat working surface, **turn all pieces right side up with all pieces in view.**
2. **Separate** out the smaller number of edge or frame pieces from the larger number of **body or content pieces.**
3. For straight-edged puzzles, find and set aside the four **corner pieces** from the separated edge pieces. (For round puzzles skip this step.)
4. Separate all remaining edge pieces into approximate **color or design** groups that as close as possible **match the sequential pattern** shown on the four edges of the box picture. Push each of these groups to their positions corresponding to top, bottom, right and left edges of the working surface.
5. **Compare the four corner pieces** to the box picture and **place the pieces** in their four **corresponding corners** of the working surface. (For round puzzles skip this step...endeavoring not to buy another one since there is no singular reference point from which to begin your work....)
6. **Complete one edge at a time, setting aside** any edge pieces that don't appear to match the edge you are working on.
7. **Using all edge pieces, join each string** of edge pieces to their four corresponding **corner pieces.**
8. Alternately **work with each** remaining color or design **group until all remaining loose pieces** are joined in a finished sub-group.
9. **Comparing with the box picture, place sub-groups** to the approximate area where it appears they should be in the finished puzzle.
10. **Re-position each finished sub-group** as a whole until it **exactly joins** corners, edges and other sub-groups to complete the puzzle.

This type of analysis often benefits every aspect of life --if it were not for the fact of man's sin nature. It should be theoretically possible to analyze and determine the best, most efficient, most effective way to accomplish anything.

But this is where the problem lies. Man's proclivity to sin leaves him spiritually deceived and vulnerable quite a bit of the time.

Man's depravity places him in a vulnerable position --even in terms of reading and understanding his Maker's rescue plan revealed in His Word. God has revealed truth that is logical, ordered and complete. Man is responsible to agree with God's order, to conduct systematic study of His orderly truth. Distinctive and fundamental is the following application to Bible study: **Theologies arrange spiritual facts**. Of all theologies, it is normative Dispensational Theology and Doctrines that are the most accurate tools to uncover biblical truth. This contrasts with deficiencies of theologies classified as covenant, reform, progressive, emerging, political or neutral systems. Study of the Bible using normative dispensational theology and doctrine identifies the following categories:

<u>Doctrinal Study</u>	<u>Theology Category</u>
The Doctrine of the Bible	Bibliology
The Doctrine of the Triune Godhead and divine works	Theology Proper and Creation
The Doctrine of God the Son	Christology
The Doctrine of God the Holy Spirit	Pneumatology
The Doctrine of Angels	Angelology
The Doctrine of Evil, Sin and Satan	Hamartiology
The Doctrine of Salvation	Soteriology
The Doctrine of Israel	Israelology
The Doctrine of the Church	Ecclesiology
The Doctrine of Things to Come	Eschatology
The Doctrine of Judgment	Eternity

Putting the Bible Puzzle together is much less difficult when the discerning Bible student determines to study God's Word systematically, finding out what God reveals about every doctrine given for man's edification. A good place to begin in systematic study is to obtain a one volume theology book written for the layman. Charles Ryrie's **Basic Theology: A Popular Systematic Guide to Understanding Biblical Truth** and Paul Enn's **The Moody Handbook of Theology** are excellent choices. Happy studying as you leave disorganized loose ends behind!

**copyright © 2010 M. J. Greene All rights reserved**

Except for brief quotations in professional reviews or articles, no part of this work may be reproduced, scanned, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form by any means, whether electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recordings, or otherwise.