

CLASSIS EXAMINATION: REPRESENTATIVE QUESTIONS IN THE AREAS OF BIBLE AND THEOLOGY

Contact the Clerk of your classis for lists of examination questions that are used by your Classis.

Bible Knowledge

1. What is the theme of the Bible? What is the Bible's main message?
2. What is a covenantal theology? Is this your position?
3. What are the various classifications of biblical literature?
4. What is the purpose of the historical books?
5. Name the major prophets and give at least three characteristics of one of them.
6. How and when was the canon formed?
7. How many Isaiahs were there and what difference does it make?
8. Do you have any problems with the Pentateuch? If so, please explain.
9. Name at least three biblical covenants and their significance.
10. Describe the occasions, problems, and theme of one of the Pauline Epistles.
11. What is the difference between lower criticism and higher criticism?
12. What are the Synoptic Gospels? Describe, compare, and explain similarities and differences between them.
13. Explain the terms "infallibility of Scripture" and "inerrancy of Scripture," the differences between them and where you stand in the infallibility-inerrancy controversy.
14. How much does one's view of the Bible affect his or her theology?
15. What is the relationship between eschatology and apocalyptic writings?
16. How do you handle so-called biblical discrepancies?
17. What is the significance of the first two chapters of Genesis to the creation and age of the universe? What is the purpose of the creation chapters? What is the relation of the creation account in Genesis to modern science?
18. In preparing a sermon what procedures do you use in exegesis? (What is involved in exegesis?)
19. What is the difference between eisegesis and exegesis?

THEOLOGY

The Doctrine of Scripture

1. What is your view of Scripture?
2. The Bible is called the Word. What does this mean?
3. Why do we receive the books of the Bible as true?
4. What does "inspired" mean with respect to the Bible? (II Timothy 3:16-17)
5. Give 2 passages to support your view of inspiration.
6. Why is the concept of the inspiration of Scripture important?
7. What is general revelation, and is it enough for salvation?
8. Support your answer. (cf Romans 1)
9. What is the value of general or natural revelation?
10. What is special revelation?
11. Is Old Testament "prophecy" always predictive? Is it ever predictive? Give examples.
12. Can someone believe in the God of the Bible without a Bible?
13. Which theologians have you studied? Which do you appreciate the most? Why?
14. Define the divisions of systematic theology: e.g., theology, Christology, soteriology, ecclesiology, eschatology.
15. What is the foundation of Reformed Theology and what does it mean?
16. What are the distinctive approaches to Scripture employed by classic liberalism, fundamentalism, and neo-orthodoxy?
17. What is hermeneutics? What is your approach to biblical interpretation?
18. How can there be so much controversy over the interpretation of one passage? (e.g., I Timothy 2:11-15; I Timothy 3:2)
19. The Bible is our only rule for faith and conduct!" Respond.
20. Is there a distinction between the historical and doctrinal passages in Scripture?
21. How does God communicate through the Scriptures?

22. What differences are there among the concepts which describe the Bible as being "inspired," "authoritative," "inerrant" and "infallible"?
23. Are all parts of the Bible equally authoritative?
24. What do you consider the most important questions to be addressed in the introduction to the Old Testament? the New Testament?
25. What are the principal distinctives of Reformed theology?
26. Compare and contrast them with evangelicalism, fundamentalism and liberalism.
27. How do you plan to use the Scriptures in your work as theologian/preacher/worship leader/pastor?

The Doctrine of God

1. Where do you believe that we derive our knowledge of God?
2. What is the Trinity ? Describe its significance. How is the concept of the Trinity supported biblically?
3. What do we mean by the attributes of God?
4. Distinguish between God's communicable and incommunicable attributes. Identify and explain at least three of each. Can God be defined by His attributes?
5. Where would we find examples of God's attributes in the Old Testament and New Testament?
6. How do the love of God and the justice of God relate? Give biblical examples of both.
7. "God is holy." What does this mean according to the Bible? What does it mean for us, His people?
8. Describe God as He is revealed in the Bible, including an explanation of His transcendence and immanence.
9. What names does the Bible use for God? Give at least three examples and explain what these names reveal about God's nature.
10. What is the essential nature of God?
11. Can you really know God? Explain.
12. What is the providence of God?
13. What is the Imago Dei (image of God)? How does this relate to Genesis 3?
14. What do we mean when we speak of a "personal God"?
15. How can God be both imminent and transcendent?
16. How involved is God in the world right now?
17. How can God look on human suffering and not eliminate it?
18. How do you understand predestination? What is its importance to your faith? Is there a difference between predestination and election? How does election relate to free will? Can these be compatible?
19. How do you resolve the tension between the responsibility of human beings and the sovereignty of God?
20. What is your concept of creation? What is its relationship to evolution?
21. Define the development of the concept of covenant in the Old Testament. Relate this to the New Testament, the history of the church, and dispensational theology.

Anthropology: Doctrine of Humankind and Sin

1. What is the relationship between God and humankind?
2. Define sin (biblically).
3. What is the origin of sin?
4. What is the extent of sin?
5. What are the effects of sin?
6. What meaning do you attach to the phrase in Ephesians 2 that we are "dead in trespasses and sins"?
7. Define the nature of humankind from a biblical point of view. What are the implications of that view as we live on this earth?
8. What is total depravity?
9. What is original sin?
10. What does Reformed theology say about the effects of sin on the ability of the natural man to know God?

11. What do the creeds of the RCA say about the depravity of unredeemed humanity?
12. What is the image of God (Genesis 3)?
13. Does an "unsaved" person still have the image of God?
14. How did the fall affect the image of God?

Christology and Soteriology: Doctrine of Christ and Salvation

1. What does "born again" mean? When does this happen? Are all Christians "born again" or only some? If only some, which ones?
2. What does the term "Son of God" mean?
3. What does the term "Son of Man" mean?
4. What do we learn of Christ in Phil. 2:5-11?
5. What are some of the names of Jesus that have deep meaning for you?
6. Why is it significant that we affirm the virgin birth of Christ?
7. What are three or four passages that teach us salvation through Christ?
8. "Jesus was God." Can you defend this statement biblically?
9. "Jesus is Lord." What does this mean?
10. Classical theology has an "Order of Salvation". What is that order? What was the church saying by establishing that order? Is it relevant today?
11. What is the significance of the cross event for believers? For nonbelievers?
12. Who is Jesus Christ?
13. Explain the incarnation. What significance does it have for believers today?
14. How can Jesus be fully human and fully divine? Why is that important?
15. What makes Jesus different from all other people?
16. Why did God come to earth in the person of Jesus Christ?
17. Why is Jesus called the "only begotten Son of God"?
18. What are the offices of Christ and the significance of each. Why is this important to our full understanding of the role of the Messiah?
19. How is the work of Christ on the cross applied to believers?
20. Explain atonement. Describe the various theories of the atonement. To which do you adhere the most closely?
21. Interpret Paul's statement that "we are in Christ" (in union with Christ). Does this make sense to a person today? How can we help someone understand?
22. What is the ministry of Jesus today?
23. What did Jesus achieve on Easter?
24. What is the significance of Christ's ascension?
25. How does Reformed Theology differ from Armenian and Roman Catholic theology regarding the subject of free will and election?
26. How has the work and person of Jesus Christ taken on significance for your life and ministry?
27. b. How will you present the meaning of the Resurrection at an Easter sunrise service?
28. A person in your Sunday School class says, "I have friends who lives a good life; do they really need Jesus?" How do you respond?
29. Who is Jesus to you?
30. Someone says to you, "Jesus was the Son of God, but he was not God." How do you respond?
31. How would you lead a freshman in high school to Christ?
32. What current misconceptions about Jesus do you want to see cleared up? (Give an example and explain how you would help someone overcome his or her misconception.)
33. How do you respond to someone who says, "I've accepted Christ as my Savior. Does it matter how I live?" Relate your answer to 2 Cor. 5:10.
34. If someone said, "I suppose the whole idea of Christ as Savior is really a kind of myth." How would you respond?

Pneumatology: The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit

1. Who is the Holy Spirit? What is His distinctive work and function?
2. Does the Holy Spirit function in the Old Testament? Give examples.
3. What does "grieving the Holy Spirit" (Eph. 4:30) mean?

4. What are the fruit of the Spirit?
5. What are the gifts of the Spirit? What is the purpose of the gifts?
6. How are they different from the fruit of the Spirit?
7. What role does the Holy Spirit play in salvation?
8. The Holy Spirit is the third person in the Trinity. What biblical evidence can you give for this?
9. What was the role of the Holy Spirit in the ministry of Jesus? Give examples.
 - i. What was the role of the Holy Spirit in the early church? Give examples.
10. How does Christ's death on the cross become effective in your life or in others?
11. When did the Holy Spirit come?
12. Does the Holy Spirit work outside of the church and believers? Explain.
13. When does the Holy Spirit come into the life of a believer?
14. What does it mean to hinder the Spirit?
15. What does it mean to walk/live in the Spirit?
16. The Spirit is the third person in the Trinity. Defend this theologically.
17. What is meant by "the baptism of (in or with) the Spirit"?
18. What does it mean to be "filled with the Spirit"?
19. What has the Holy Spirit been doing in your life this past year?
20. What is the work of the Holy Spirit in the church today?
21. What "grieves" the Holy Spirit today?
22. A member of your church tells you that you should teach on the need to be "baptized in the Spirit" as a secondary experience to being filled with the Spirit. How will you respond?
23. What are your spiritual gifts? How will these help you in ministry?
24. What have been some positive effects of the Charismatic Movement on the church? What are some negative effects?
25. How do we know the Spirit is present?
26. Someone comes to you one day and says, "I've been led by the Spirit to do (such and so)" which you believe to be clearly wrong. What do you say to this person?

F. Ecclesiology: The Doctrine of the Church

1. What is the church?
2. What is meant by the statement, "The church is the Body of Christ"?
3. What is meant by the statement, "The church is the Bride of Christ"?
4. What is "the great commission"? How does this relate to the church?
5. What is the meaning of discipleship?
6. What is the "communion of the Saints"?
7. What is the purpose of the church?
8. What are the marks of the true church (according to Reformed theology)?
9. Take each attribute of the church (e.g., apostolic, universal, holy), define it, and relate it to today's world.
10. Who are members of the church?
11. What do we mean by "covenant theology"? Do you subscribe to this theology?
12. What is the relationship of the church to God's covenant?
13. What is the difference between the "Kingdom of God" and the "Church"?
14. What is Calvin's doctrine of the catholicity and unity of the church? The purity of the church?
15. What is the power of the church?
16. What is the role of the pastor in the church?
17. Explain how the church can be both an organism and an organization.
18. What is the place of spiritual gifts in the life of the church?
19. We hear people say, "I don't need to be a member of a church. I can worship God just as well (in my home, in the garden, in the woods, [wherever])," or "Jesus yes, church no!" How do you respond?
20. Does a Christian need to be a member of a local church? Why?
21. What challenges face the church as we move into the 21st century?
22. What are some keys to church growth?
23. Should there be churches of different types, e.g., in their approach to worship styles?

24. What can one expect from the church? What are some of the benefits of membership in a local church? (Contrast the preceding with attendance in a local church.)
25. What should the church expect from each other?
26. The historic church in its main branches has held to the concept that the church is by nature catholic. If this is so, what should be our approach to the ecumenical movement?
27. To what extent should the unity of the catholic church be demonstrated? (Include reference to the ecumenical movement.)
28. Some insist that worship and educational contexts should be used for evangelistic purposes. Evaluate that position in the light of your stand on the nature of the church.
29. To what extent should the church make corporate stands and announcements on ethical issues? on public policy issues?

Eschatology: The Doctrine of Last Things

1. What is the Second Coming of Jesus Christ?
2. Explain final judgment. Upon what standard will Christians be judged in the last judgment? Will all human beings be saved?
3. What will our resurrection be like? What kind of bodies will we have, if any? Document your answer with reference to specific biblical texts.
4. What does the Bible give as signs of the end times?
5. Will Christ's return (Second Coming) be literal and physical?
6. Is the "rapture" a biblical doctrine? Explain.
7. What are the two main parts of eschatology? Why is eschatology important?
8. What is Eschatology? What is Realized or Inaugurated Eschatology?
9. What is heaven? Hell?
10. What happens when a believer dies? A nonbeliever?
11. What is the intermediate state, and where are Christians between the time they die and Christ's Second Coming?
12. What does Reformed theology believe with respect to the end of history?
13. Explain the three main millennial systems. Where does dispensationalism fit and what is it? To which one do you hold? Why?
14. What will happen to Satan at the final judgment?
15. When will Christ return? Could He return today?
16. What is "the new heaven and the new earth"?

Selected Theological Terms (Be able to give a brief definition of each)

Adoption	Exegetical Method	Priesthood of Believers
Apologetics	Faith	Regeneration
Biblical Theology	Fundamentalism	Sacraments
Charismatic	Grace	Salvation
Common Grace	Hermeneutics	Sanctification
Conservative/Liberal	Historical Theology	Scripture
Conversion	Image Bearer	Sin
Covenant	Justification	Sovereignty of God
Divine Attributes	Kingdom	Spiritual Gifts
Doctrine	Pastoral Theology	Systematic Theology
Dogma	Perseverance	Trinity
Dogmatic Theology	Polemics	
Election	Prayer	
Evangelical Theology	Predestination	
Faith		