

701: Nature and Method of Biblical Theology

two credits

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Please do feel free to meet with the professor during his scheduled office hours (Thurs 1:30-4 pm). Be sure to sign up on the schedule sheet on the faculty secretary's desk

Purpose of the Course:

There is no discipleship or ministry apart from a Word-centered life. Being Word-centered means being rooted and grounded in the comprehensive teaching of the Bible. Thus for ourselves and others we need to systematize the truths scattered throughout the Bible and present them to people in a coherent, logical form. In order to do this accurately, we need to take our cues from the manner or form in which God reveals Himself.

Description of the Course:

The way God revealed himself in history is one aspect of our study (covenants, historical patterns). Another is the investigation of key concepts running throughout the Scriptures (e.g., fear of God, kingdom). A third aspect is distilling the theological teaching of the Bible book by book. In this course will be sample each of these approaches, after a methodological orientation.

Objectives of the Course:

The student will:

1. understand the distinction between systematic and biblical theology;
2. trace the history of God's revelation as it is developed in creation, fall, Noah, the Patriarchs, kingship, the prophets, psalms, the wisdom literature, and all the way to revelation of Christ.
3. present the grand scheme of redemptive history and its significance for interpreting individual texts.
4. appreciate the interconnectedness of Scripture, and its strategy.

Required Text:

Vos, Geerhardus. *Biblical Theology: Old and New Testaments*. Carlisle, Penn.: Banner of Truth, 1948.

Requirements:

1. Write the paper; -50%

Write a 10 page paper in which you pick a biblical theme and trace its history throughout redemptive history. A rough draft of this paper is due midway through the semester; the final draft is due on April 29 at 5 pm. Use the [Style Guide](#).

2. Book Review; -30%

Write a 8 page book review on two books in the recommended resource section of the syllabus. These reviews should not treat the books exhaustively, but compare their method, and analyze how they execute their design, as well as evaluate the volumes critically, that is positively and negatively. Also, there should be some discussion as to how these books relate to the method of biblical theology discerned in the main textbook, Geerhardus Vos. Due April 8 5 pm.

3. Final Exam – 20%

The exam will be open-book and will test you on the lectures and readings. Due May 6 5 pm.

Academic Integrity:

It is assumed that students submitting written work to PRTS have signed their agreement to PRTS's doctrinal standards. Please submit work that is consistent with these standards.

Unauthorized copying or use of other people's work, including downloaded files of various kinds, is unacceptable, as well as any other undocumented or poorly documented use of written or spoken material. Please see the PRTS Student Handbook for details. When in doubt, ask for input. Suspect papers will be scanned with the seminary's online plagiarism scanner.

Grading:

The standard PRTS grade scale is used.

Philosophy Of Learning:

The Capacity for Knowledge

God's Word tells us that we have the capacity to know God since we've been created in the image of God. Though that capacity has been radically corrupted through the fall, when God works in grace, he principally and gradually restores it by his Spirit, as the Spirit reshapes us after the image of Christ. Thus by grace in Jesus Christ, and through the illuminating work of God's Holy Spirit, we can once again know God and his glory, know truth, know each other, and know everything we need to know to live to the glory of God.

God uses His self-revelation in the twin books of nature and His Word to that end. For us fallen creatures the Scriptures are the only path towards true knowledge. The Scriptures are the

Word of God, infallibly down to the very words. The Word of God is the touchstone of truth. Thus we must have a thorough-going disposition of teachability, in order to receive this Word of God, its content, and come under its claim.

The Connectivity of Knowledge

God's Word also tells us that alongside our capacity for knowledge, we have the capacity for righteousness and holiness. We can distinguish these capacities, but we cannot separate them. Right knowledge tends to righteousness and holiness, just as righteousness and holiness are based on true knowledge. Knowledge that does not tend towards righteousness and holiness is false or formal knowledge, and destructive. Accordingly, I teach knowledge with an eye to show the connectivity of knowledge to practice and piety.

The Components of Knowledge

As I teach any subject – whether exegesis, hermeneutics, biblical theology, etc.—I'm aiming that the student makes fundamental gains in:

1. Discerning the Relevance of the subject;
2. Grasping the Content of the subject;
3. Accessing the Sources of the subject;
4. Practicing the Skills related to the subject;
5. Pursuing the Implications flowing from the subject;
6. Engaging the Debates involved in the subject; and
7. Radiating a Passion fitting the subject.

Other Helpful Resources:

*Alexander, T. Desmond. *From Paradise to the Promised Land*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Books, 2002.

Alexander, T. Desmond, Brian S. Rosner, eds. *New Dictionary of Biblical Theology*. Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 2000.

*Beale, G.K. *A New Testament Biblical Theology*. Grand Rapids, Baker, 2011

*Beale, G.K. *The Temple and the Church's Mission: A Biblical Theology of the Dwelling Place of God*. Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 2004.

*Beale, G.K. *We Become What We Worship: A Biblical Theology of Idolatry*. Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 2008.

*Clowney, Edmund P. *Preaching and Biblical Theology*. Phillipsburg, Penn.: P&R, 1979.

*Childs, Brevard S. *Biblical Theology of the Old and New Testaments: Theological Reflections on the Christian Bible*. Minneapolis, Minn.: Fortress Press, 1992.

*Dempster, Stephen G. *Dominion and Dynasty: A Biblical Theology of the Hebrew Bible*. Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 2003.

*Dumbrell, W.J. *Covenant and Creation: A Theology of Old Testament Covenants*. Nashville, Tenn.: Thomas Nelson, 1984.

*Edwards, Jonathan. "A History of the Work of Redemption" in *The Works of Jonathan Edwards*, vol. 1. Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 2003: 532-615.

*Goldsworthy, Graeme. *Preaching the Whole Bible as Christian Scripture: The Application of Biblical Theology to Expository Preaching*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2000.

*Hamilton, James. *God's Glory in Salvation Through Judgment*. Wheaton, Ill.: Crossway, 2010.

*Hafemann, Scott J. ed. *Biblical Theology: Retrospect and Prospect*. Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 2002.

Kaiser, Walter C. Jr. "The Blessing of David: The Charter for Humanity." *The Law and the Prophets*, O.T. Allis, ed. Phillipsburg, Penn.: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing: 298-318.

*Kaiser, Walter C., Jr. *The Promise-Plan of God: A Biblical Theology of the Old and New Testaments*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 2008.

*Kostenberger, Andreas, and Peter T. O'Brien. *Salvation to the Ends of the Earth: A Biblical Theology of Mission*. Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 2001.

*McComiskey, Thomas Edward. *The Covenant of Promise: A Theology of the Old Testament Covenants*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker, 1985.

*Oehler, Gustave Friedrich. *Theology of the Old Testament*. Grand Rapids, Mich. Zondervan, nd.

*Owen, John. *Biblical Theology: The History of Theology from Adam to Christ*. Trans. Stephen P. Westcott. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Soli Deo Gloria, 1994.

*Payne, J. Barton. *The Theology of the Older Testament*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 1962.

*Williamson, Paul R. *Sealed With an Oath: Covenant in God's Unfolding Purpose*. Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 2007.

*Witsius, Herman. *The Economy of the Covenants Between God and Man Comprehending a Complete Body of Divinity*. 2 vols. Escondido: Den Dulk Christian Foundation, 1990).

*Wright, Christopher J. H. *The Mission of God's People: A Biblical Theology of the Church's Mission*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 2010.

*Zuck, R. ed. *A Biblical Theology of the Old Testament*. Chicago, Ill.: Moody, 1991.