

ASSEMBLIES OF GOD THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
BTH 529 Foundations of Biblical Theology

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Spring 2004

COURSE SYLLABUS

COURSE DESCRIPTION

An introduction to biblical theology covering methodology, history, basic issues, and the foundational content of the field. Correlation between biblical and systematic theology is explored and discussed. The course includes an examination of the inspiration and authority of the Scriptures and the unity and diversity of the biblical revelation.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

After completing this course, the student should be able to:

1. discern between the nature of biblical and systematic theology;
2. know the issues in biblical theology and possible Pentecostal responses;
3. work in other biblical theology courses with greater efficiency;
4. apply insights gained from biblical theology to the interpretation of the Scriptures;
5. appreciate more fully the rich and variegated tapestry of biblical revelation;
6. reflect an awareness of the basic content of biblical theology.

TEXTBOOKS

Required:

Carson, D.A., et. al., editors. *New Dictionary of Biblical Theology*. Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 2000. (Also available on CD with other IVP titles through Logos)

Recommended:

*Black, D. A., and D. S. Dockery. *New Testament Criticism and Interpretation*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1991.

*Dockery S. David, et. al. *Foundations for Biblical Interpretation: A Complete Library of Tools and Resources*. Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1994.

(* indicates book is on reserve in library; also in bibliography)

COURSE OUTLINE

January 12

I. Introduction: Overview of the general nature of theology

The introduction seeks to clarify an understanding of theology in general as it is done in various systems and cultures of the world and to distinguish between systematic theology and biblical theology, noting how one relates to the other.

A. Overview of systematic theology:

1. The nature of theology: (Read *NDBT* [textbook] pp.89-104)
2. The function of theology
3. The methods of theology (Read *NDBT* [textbook], pp.52-64)
4. Distinguishing between Systematic and Biblical

On reserve are several articles (abstract with article) related to this section. Please carefully read them for this section (accessed from

http://www.findarticles.com/cf_0/moLAL/1_33/9822800/print.jhtml):

Roland E. Murphy, "When is Theology "Biblical"? Some Reflections," *Biblical Theology Bulletin* (Spring, 2003).

David M. Bossman, "Biblical Theology For a Secular Society. (Presenting the Issue)," *BTB* (Spring, 2991).

B. Various approaches of systematic theology:

1. Reformed: Baptist/Presbyterian/Lutheran
2. Liberation theology (Black or Hispanic)
3. Roman Catholic
4. Orthodox
5. Black African (Evangelical)
6. Methodist
7. Asian (Chinese, Korean, or Japanese) (Evangelical)
8. Classical Pentecostal (AG; Church of God; Four Square)

January 19-February 2

II. Biblical Theology (Read *NDBT* [textbook] pp.3-27; pp. 27-51)

This section surveys the various issues relating to a theological understanding of Scripture, notes the reasons for the various issues, and attempts to respond to them in light of biblical revelation. Again, here are articles/abstracts related to this section on reserve (same URL address as above). Please read them carefully:

David M. Bossman, "Rethinking the Past For an Energized Biblical Theology," *BTB* (Summer, 2000).

Roland E. Murphy, "Once Again—the 'Center' of the Old Testament. (Old Testament Theology)," *BTB* (Fall, 2001).

Robert K. Gnuse, "Words That Testify of God: The Theology of the Old Testament," *BTB* (Fall, 2001).

Robert Gnuse, "The Critic of Biblical Theologians: A Review of James Barr's *The Concept of Biblical Theological: An Old Testament Perspective*. (Book Review)," *BTB* (Summer, 2001).

Anna Brawley, "Grafted In: Why Christians are Thinking About a Jewish Biblical Theology," *BTB* (Winter, 2000).

A. Issues in Biblical Theology

1. The issue of a center (Read *NDBT*, pp. 64-72)
2. The issue of unity and diversity
3. The issue of method
4. The issue of a starting point
5. The issue of a developmental aspect in biblical theology

B. Various approaches to theology of the Old and New Testaments

The following Old Testament theologians are provided so the student may see how and why these issues emerge.

- C. Samuel L. Terrien
 - 1. Theodorus C. Vriezen
 - 2. Walter C. Kaiser, Jr.
 - 3. Gerhard vonRad
 - 4. Elmer A. Martens
 - 5. Walther Eichrodt
 - 6. John L. McKenzie
 - 7. Brevard Childs
 - 8. George Wright

The following New Testament theologians are provided so the student may see how and why these issues emerge.

- 1. Leon Morris
- 2. George E. Ladd
- 3. Leonhard Goppelt
- 4. Werner Georg Kümmel
- 5. Hans Conzelmann
- 6. Alan Richardson
- 7. Donald Guthrie
- C. Biblical theology issues (Read NDBT [textbook] pp. 104-111)
 - 1. The issue of continuity and discontinuity (Read NDBT pp.72-89)
 - 2. The place of the Old Testament in biblical theology
 - 3. Prescription versus description

February 9-16

III. First Paper due: About seven pages on personal approach of doing biblical theology

IV. Application: Doing Biblical Theology

We will work with the biblical text, interacting with the issues we have just discussed. We will work through them as a class, the topics and texts are given in the following outline, and we will come to class prepared to contribute and discuss.

- A. A turning point in biblical theology is John the Baptist and his ministry. We will begin with him. (*Consult Ladd's and Goppelt's books for a similar starting point.*)
 - OT source(s)
 - NT references
 - New Exodus
 - The nature of salvation
 - The nature of the Church
 - The role of the Spirit
 - Compare his ministry with Jesus'
 - Continuity/discontinuity
 - Diversity in Unity
 - Description/prescription

February 23-March 15 (Spring break March 1-5)

- B. We turn now to discovering what each NT writer took John to mean regarding the contrast between him and Jesus.
 - Diversity within unity
 - Description/prescription
 - The nature of salvation

The nature of the Church
The role of the Spirit
Matthew
Mark
John

March 22-April 5

C. "B" continued: Luke-Acts
Diversity within Unity
Description/prescription
The nature of salvation
The nature of the Church
The role of the Spirit

April 12

D. Wrap up and review

V. Research Paper Due

April 19

VI. Final Examination

METHODOLOGY

1. Class preparation: Reading of textbooks and other related material
2. Participation in small class groups (encouraged)
3. Lectures
4. Class discussion/participation in class.
5. Examination.
6. Writing of research papers

REQUIREMENTS

1. Class attendance (see the Student Handbook for policy) and participation.
NOTE: Students are expected to prepare in advance for the next class. We will discuss relevant topics from the class syllabus. Students are to ask questions and otherwise interact in class discussion. (Involvement in small study groups during the semester is highly recommended.)
2. Completion of all assigned readings (textbook and articles).
3. Take the Exam (essay) as scheduled.
4. Write a seven page paper on one's personal way of doing biblical theology, interacting with a number of biblical theologians, some of which we have just talked about. Attention should be paid to the whys and wherefores of a personal method.
5. Write a 15 to 20 page research paper on a biblical theological topic, using the techniques discussed and being sensitive to the issues learned in class.

GRADING PROCEDURE

1. The total number of possible points to be earned in the semester is 250.

| | |
|-----------------|------------|
| 2. Exam (essay) | 100 points |
| 4. First paper | 50 points |
| 5. Second paper | 100 points |

Averaged number of points and appropriate percentage:

| |
|------------|
| 95-100%=A |
| 90- 94%=A- |
| 87- 89%=B+ |
| 84- 86%=B |
| 80- 83%=B- |
| 77-79%=C+ |
| 74-76%=C |
| 70-73%=C- |
| 65-69%=D |

NOTE: Late assignments will be penalized.

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SPECIFIC DATA

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