

ASSEMBLIES OF GOD THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
BTH 529 Foundations of Biblical Theology

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Fall 2005
Thurs 1:30-4:15 pm

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.

Here are some elaborations of the succinct formal description. Many people take a naïve approach to theology knowing little or nothing about what is involved or why people say and act the way they do. One of the first objectives is to discover the difference and the relationship between systematic and biblical theology. Another one is to discover that the understanding and method of doing theology differs in regards to culture, ethnicity, and denomination. Still another is to know that theology must change its methodology when encountering a change in time, culture, or geography, or else it will lose its relevancy. Theology is never an end in itself. Also, a goal is to discover how theology functions. It is also important to understand why and how biblical theologians do theology so one can arrive at a personal method of doing it. Significant also for the course is to see how it is done, to see it modeled in class. It is not the intention of the course for every student to write a work on biblical theology; rather, the point of the class is to allow students to develop skills so that they may be better able to interpret scripture in a manner more in tune with biblical revelation, to impact sermon preparation and other practical necessities of Christian living.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

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

1. Read the Bible with a better biblical theological hermeneutic and arrive at a more sound relevant and biblical interpretation;
2. Prepare a biblical theological sermon, lesson, or article;
3. Evaluate various kinds of literature that are in the market place of church leaders and congregants in respect to their biblical theological soundness;
4. Demonstrate a skill that is able to interpret biblical texts and do biblical theology through the eyes of different cultures and different historical circumstances;
5. Appreciate the different ways of doing biblical theology and evaluate them;
6. Do biblical theology by interpreting a variety of biblical genres.
7. Discern between the nature of biblical and systematic theology;
8. Appreciate more fully the rich and variegated tapestry of biblical revelation;
9. Reflect an awareness of basic theological content of the Bible.

TEXTBOOKS

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.)

Marshall, I. Howard. *Beyond the Bible: Moving From Scripture to Theology*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2004.

COURSE OUTLINE

September 1 (begin), 8 (complete and review)

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.

Reading for this section:

Choose several sources, systematic theology books or theological dictionaries/encyclopedias, and read their definition of theology. This will not take many pages but ask as you read how each understands theology in a general sense. Choose a variety of denominational and ethnic approaches. See in the outline below regarding the varieties. Among others, suggestions are:

- Stanley J. Grenz, *Revisioning Evangelical Theology: A Fresh Agenda for the 21st Century (IVP)*. (If you can read all 189 pages of this book you will pick up the issues in the theological shift in contemporary culture. You may want to, at least, scan its contents.
- Stanley J. Grenz, *Theology for the Community of God* (Broadman Press), 1-26.
- Consult the Power Point Slides in drive “y,” “Class Notes,” “Aker,” “Foundations of Biblical Theology” for other examples and notes for this section. Drive “y” is on the computers in the library.
- See additional reading below.

The lesson outline is:

1. Discovering the nature of theology--defining it; (Read *NDBT* [textbook] pp.89-104).
2. Various ways of conceptualizing and doing it: (Read *NDBT* [textbook], pp.52-64).
 - a. First dimension: denominationally/religiously and ethnically (examples):
 - i. Reformed: Baptist/Presbyterian/Lutheran,
 - ii. Liberation theology (Black or Hispanic),
 - iii. Roman Catholic,
 - iv. Orthodox,
 - v. Black African (Evangelical),
 - vi. Methodist,
 - vii. Asian (Chinese, Korean, or Japanese) (Evangelical),
 - viii. Classical Pentecostal (AG; Church of God; Four Square).

- b. Second dimension: anthropological (see chart):
 - i. Occidental (contractual/individualistic societies);
 - ii. Oriental (kinship/group societies).

September 8

- c. Third dimension:
 - i. Relational orientation kinship/ group societies),
 - 1. doing,
 - 2. being,
 - ii. Reason versus rationalism,
 - iii. Experience,
 - iv. Revelation,
 - v. Ideology,
 - vi. Tradition,
 - vii. Propositions.
- 3. Function of theology.
- 4. Distinguishing systematic from biblical theology (Read *NDBT* [textbook] pp. 89-111 “Systematic Theology and Biblical Theology”).

September 15

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

This class will focus on surfacing and defining the issues in biblical theology.

The **reading** for this area of biblical theology is covered well in **our textbook**, the main reading for this section. Note how our text defines biblical theology.

<i>Readings on Biblical Theology Issues are:</i>	<i>Biblical Theology Introductory readings are:</i>
<p><i>NDBT</i> [textbook], pp. 64-72</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “New Testament Use of the Old Testament” <p><i>NDBT</i> [textbook], 81-89</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Relationship of Old Testament and New Testament” Particular Application <p><i>NDBT</i> [Textbook] pp. 104-12</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Preaching and Biblical Theology” 	<p><i>NDBT</i> [textbook], pp. 1-11</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Biblical Theology” <p><i>NDBT</i> [textbook], pp. 11 - 19</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “History of Biblical Theology” <p><i>NDBT</i> [textbook], 20-27</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Challenges to Biblical Theology” <p><i>NDBT</i> [textbook], pp. 27- 34</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “The Canon of Scripture” <p><i>NDBT</i> [textbook], pp. 34- 42</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Scripture” <p><i>NDBT</i> [textbook], pp.43-51</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Biblical History” <p><i>NDBT</i> [textbook], pp. 52-64</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exegesis and Hermeneutics

Special Readings on the subject are: ((articles online accessed from http://www.findarticles.com/cf_0/moLAL/1_33/9822800/print.jhtml). These supplement the reading of the textbook and offer further explication of the issues. These articles purpose to expose the student to current thinking in the journals.

- David M. Bossman, “Rethinking the Past For an Energized Biblical Theology,” *BTB* (Summer, 2000).
- David M. Bossman, “Biblical Theology For a Secular Society. (Presenting the Issue),” *BTB* (Spring, 2001).
- Anna Brawley, ”Grafted In: Why Christians are Thinking About a Jewish Biblical Theology *BTB* (Winter 2000).
- 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).
- Roland E. Murphy, “When is Theology “Biblical”? Some Reflections,” *Biblical Theology Bulletin* (Spring, 2003).
- Roland E. Murphy, “Once Again—the ‘Center’ of the Old Testament. (Old Testament Theology),” *BTB* (Fall, 2001).
- Marshall, I. Howard, “Developing a Biblical Hermeneutic for a Developing Theology.” (An article in the Class Notes/Aker/Foundations of Biblical Theology folder on Y drive).
- **You may read** brief introductions to each of the biblical theologians below. You will find the introductory material in the front of each one’s book and/or in Gerhard Hasel’s *New Testament Theology: Basic Issues in the Current Debate* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978) and *Old Testament Theology: Basic Issues in the Current Debate* (4th ed. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991). Also, Ben C. Ollenberger, Elmer A. Martens, and Gerhard F. Hasel., *The Flowering of Old Testament Theology* (Winona Lake, IND: Eisenbrauns, 1992). All are on reserve.

A. Issues in Biblical Theology

1. The issue of a center,
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,
6. The issue of continuity and discontinuity,
7. Prescription versus description,
8. The place of the Old Testament in biblical theology.

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

<p>The following Old Testament theologians are provided so the student may see that and why certain issues emerge.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Samuel L. Terrien 2. Theodorus C. Vriezen 3. Walter C. Kaiser, Jr. 4. Gerhard von Rad 5. Elmer A. Martens 6. Walther Eichrodt 7. John L. McKenzie 8. Brevard Childs 9. George Wright 	<p>The following New Testament theologians are provided so the student may see that and why certain issues emerge.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Leon Morris 2. George E. Ladd 3. Leonhard Goppelt 4. Werner Georg Kümmel 5. Hans Conzelmann 6. Alan Richardson 7. Donald Guthrie
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September 22

III. First Paper due: A critical review and analysis of *Beyond the Bible: Moving From Scripture to Theology*. About seven pages in length (exclusive of title page, and etc.) We will also discuss this a bit in this class.

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 [i.e., study the biblical portions and consult your textbook and other commentaries as necessary] to contribute and discuss.

- Old Testament Theology

- Doing theology from the Psalms: **study Psalms 135** and **prepare** by looking at the following:

Theology from Poetry

<p><i>Exegetical analysis</i></p> <p>Determine Structure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Types of parallelism: synthetic, analytic, synonymous, ● Genre: chiasmic, ● Figures of speech <p>Interpretative Setting</p> <p>Themes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Salvation* ● God ● Corporate worship ● Creation, Creator 	<p><i>Biblical Theology issues:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Prescription ● Description ● Continuity ● Discontinuity ● Unity/diversity ● Development ● Beginning point ● Synthetic Form/organization
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*See Harris' conclusion in his article in NBDT "salvation", Salvation is his center

September 29

Application: Doing Biblical Theology

As in the above, 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.

- Old Testament Theology

- Doing theology from the prophets: **study Isaiah 40-43** and **prepare** by looking at the following:

Theology from the Prophets

<i>Exegetical analysis</i> Determine Structure of chapters Look for figures of speech/metaphors Interpretative Setting of Possible Themes <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Salvation• God: names and character• Creation, Creator• Prophecy/prophet• Repentance• Spirit• Messiah• Church/Israel	<i>Biblical Theology issues:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Prescription• Description• Continuity• Discontinuity• Unity/diversity• Development• Beginning point• Synthetic Form/organization
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October 6

CHAPEL 1:30-2:45 PM

Application: Doing Biblical Theology

- Old Testament Theology

- Doing theology from the prophets: **study Ezekiel 34, 37, and 47** and **prepare** by looking at the following:

Theology from the Prophets

<p><i>Exegetical analysis</i> Determine Structure of chapters Look for figures of speech/metaphors Interpretative Setting of Possible Themes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Salvation • God: names and character • Prophecy/prophet • Spirit • Church/Israel 	<p><i>Biblical Theology issues:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prescription • Description • Continuity • Discontinuity • Unity/diversity • Development • Beginning point • Synthetic Form/organization
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October 13

Application: Doing Biblical Theology

- Old Testament Theology
 - Doing theology from narrative portions: **study Genesis 15** and **prepare** by looking at the following:

Theology from Narrative

<p><i>Exegetical analysis</i> Determine Narrative Structure of chapter Look for characterization Protagonist/antagonist Plot Foil Climax Sources of theology Interpretative Setting of Possible Themes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Salvation • God: names and character • Dreams/revelation • Covenant 	<p><i>Biblical Theology issues:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prescription • Description • Continuity • Discontinuity • Unity/diversity • Development • Beginning point • Synthetic Form/organization
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Special note: **consult** this helpful paperback: Leland Ryken, *How to Read the Bible as Literature* (Zondervan Publishing, 1984) and Leland Ryken and Tremper Longman III, eds. *A Complete Literary Guide to the Bible* (Zondervan, 1993). See also the Select Bibliography at the end of this syllabus.

October 20

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.

- New Testament Theology
 - Doing theology from the Synoptic Gospels: **study the parable of the lost sheep in Luke 15:1-7 and Matthew 18:10-14** and **prepare** by looking at the following:

Theology from the Synoptic Gospels

<i>Exegetical analysis</i> Determine order of events in each Gospel (Synoptic exegesis) Look for differences and similarities Diachronic reading (narrative) Synchronic comparison (use a synopsis) Genre Interpretative Settings of Gospels Possible Themes	<i>Biblical Theology issues:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Prescription• Description• Continuity• Discontinuity• Unity/diversity• Development• Beginning point• Synthetic Form/organization
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October 24 – 28 Fall Study Break (no regular classes)

November 3

Application: Doing Biblical Theology

- New Testament Theology
 - Doing theology from the Epistles: **study Romans 6 and 7** and **prepare** by looking at the following:

Theology from the Epistles

<i>Exegetical analysis</i> Genre & function of letter Direct address of Genre Structure of chapters Form of diatribe Note verb tenses Themes: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sanctification• Anthropology• Spirit• Christology	<i>Biblical Theology issues:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Prescription• Description• Continuity• Discontinuity• Unity/diversity• Development• Beginning point• Synthetic Form/organization
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November 10 and 17

Application: Doing Biblical Theology

- New Testament Theology
 - Doing theology from Acts: **study Acts 3** and **prepare** by looking at the following:

Theology from Acts

<i>Exegetical analysis</i> Structure of chapter Peter's speech Narrative characteristics Themes: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Christology• Salvation/the gospel• Influence of Greco-Roman culture on theology	<i>Biblical Theology issues:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Prescription• Description• Continuity• Discontinuity• Unity/diversity• Development• Beginning point• Synthetic Form/organization
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November 24 Thanksgiving holiday

December 1

V. Biblical Theology Paper due (2 models on reserve)

Application: Doing Biblical Theology

- New Testament Theology
 - Doing theology from the Gospel of John: **study John 2-4** and **prepare** by looking at the following:

Theology from John

<p><i>Exegetical analysis</i> Nature of John's Gospel Structure of chapters Narrative section Themes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Christology/Messiah • Salvation • Temple • Church • New Exodus 	<p><i>Biblical Theology issues:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prescription • Description • Continuity • Discontinuity • Unity/diversity • Development • Beginning point • Synthetic Form/organization
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December 8

Application: Doing Biblical Theology

- New Testament Theology
 - Doing theology from Apocalyptic: **study Revelation 12** and **prepare** by looking at the following:

Theology from Apocalyptic

<p><i>Exegetical analysis</i> Nature of apocalyptic Structure of chapter Themes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Christology/Messiah • Salvation • Evil and Satan • Use of imagery in theology 	<p><i>Biblical Theology issues:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prescription • Description • Continuity • Discontinuity • Unity/diversity • Development • Beginning point • Synthetic Form/organization
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December 15

VI. Final Class: Sermon and its discussion due

METHODOLOGY

1. Class preparation: Reading of textbooks and other related materials;
2. Participation in small class groups (encouraged);
3. Lectures;
4. Class discussion/participation in class;
5. Writing of papers:
 - **Seven (7) page** review of *Beyond the Bible: Moving From Scripture to Theology*;
 - **Fifteen (15) to twenty (20) page** research paper on a biblical theological topic;
 - **Ten (10) page** biblical theological sermon.

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 (textbooks and articles).
3. Write a seven page review of *Beyond the Bible: Moving From Scripture to Theology*. (Due date in course outline.)
4. 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. (Due date in course outline.)
5. Write out a ten (10) page sermon, ready to preach, based on a small paragraph of scripture. Make sure that you have employed properly and considered every biblical theology issue in it. Be sure that it is done with the biblical theological hermeneutic developed in class this semester. (Due date in course outline.)

GRADING PROCEDURE

1. The total number of possible points to be earned in the semester is 225.
2. Review 50 points Sept 22
3. Biblical Theological paper 100 points Dec 1
4. Sermon 75 points Dec 15

Averaged number of points and appropriate percentage:

Publishable	=A+
94-100%	=A
90- 93%	=A-
87- 89%	=B+
84- 86%	=B
80- 83%	=B-
77- 79%	=C+
74- 76%	=C
70- 73%	=C-
67-69%	=D+
64- 66%	=D
60-63%	=D-

NOTE: Late assignments will be penalized.

SELECT BIBLIOGRAPHY

(* indicates before entry indicates book is on reserve in library)

BOOKS

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*Goppelt, L. *Theology of the New Testament*. 2 vols. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1981; 1982.

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*Guthrie, D. *New Testament Theology*. Downer's Grove, IL: IVP, 1981.

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*Hubbard, Robert L., Jr., Robert K. Johnston, and Robert P. Meye, eds. *Studies in Old Testament Theology*. Dallas: Word Publishing, 1992.

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*_____. *Toward Rediscovering the Old Testament*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1987.

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SPECIFIC DATA

Prepared by Benny C. Aker, Ph.D., June 2005