

**ASSEMBLIES OF GOD THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY**

Degree Completion Program  
Springfield, Missouri

**BTHD 640 SPECIALIZED STUDIES IN BIBLICAL THEOLOGY:  
OLD TESTAMENT THEOLOGY FOR CHRISTIANS TODAY**

**July 19, 26, August 2, 9, 14, 2007**  
**Thursday evening 6:00 – 10:00 pm**

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**Summer 2007**

**COURSE SYLLABUS**

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

A study of the message, important themes, and key theological concepts of the books of the Old Testament in context, with attention to the relation to the New Testament and to Christians today.

**OBJECTIVES**

Upon the successful completion of this course the student should be able to:

1. Explain briefly the field of Old Testament theology.
2. Discuss key Old Testament teachings through the major divisions of the O.T.
3. Describe the continuity and unity of Old Testament theology.
4. Identify the underlying theological principles in any Old Testament passage and apply them to the Church today with proper understanding of their relation to New Testament theology, including being able to explain how to go about this.

**TEXTBOOKS**

***Required:***

Cotton, Roger D., ed. *BTH 530 OT Theology Handouts, 2007*, Springfield, MO: by AGTS (purchase in the AGTS Bookstore).

House, Paul R. *Old Testament Theology*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1998.

Kaiser, Walter C. *Toward an Old Testament Theology*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1978.

## **BASIC OUTLINE**

I plan to cover the following topics as time permits:

1. The field of Old Testament theology and doing it.
2. Foundational theology of Genesis
3. The theme of the Promise and the central message of the Scriptures.
4. Major theological concepts as taught in the Pentateuch: especially covenant, law, God's presence, and holiness.
5. The relationship of the Sinai Covenant and laws to the Christian.
6. Joshua--Kings, theology of the land, leadership, and holy war.
7. Poetic and Wisdom literature, holistic theology of the struggles and hope of the righteous and the concept of biblical wisdom.
8. Prophecy and the rest of the Old Testament.

## **METHODOLOGY**

Lecture, discussion, readings, essays, and researched application project.

## **COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

You must talk to the professor about any absences.

### **1. FOR CLASS 1:**

Goals of the session and the assignments below: for the student to understand the mindset of doing biblical theology; to establish the approach of the professor for the class; to equip the students to do word studies and generally the kind of work called for in this course, toward more effective Bible study; and to summarize the foundational theology of Genesis.

### **HAVE READ:**

- 1) "Expectations for Graduate Students" in the handouts book.
- 2) For the writing assignment explained below, read the following on reserve at the front desk in the library:
  - A) Read House on the history and method of Old Testament Theology, Preface, Chapter 1, and Appendix pp. 548-559.
  - B) Essay #9, "The Flowering and Floundering of Old Testament Theology," by Elmer Martens, in NIDOTTE, pp. 172-84 (see Bibliography under VanGemeran)
  - C) Kaiser, Preface through page 69
  - D) Essay #3, "Old Testament History: A Theological Perspective, A. The Nature of the OT: Theology, Not History," by Eugene Merrill, in NIDOTTE, pp. 68-85

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- 3) Read Genesis 1-3 and think about the message presented there in its ancient Near Eastern context. We will discuss the principles taught there in class.

NOTE: Be prepared for each class to discuss the handouts and relevant sections of the textbooks (all to be finished by the end of the course), and any other assigned readings according to the class schedule below. Any specified readings not in the book of handouts, along with other selected important sources, are on 2 hour reserve at the front desk of the library.

**TURN IN** a 3-5 page essay on what it means to do Old Testament theology based on the readings above listed under 2). Begin with your **definition** of Old Testament theology as a sub field of biblical theology in contrast with (but not in conflict with) systematic theology (be sure to include your definition of systematic theology for comparison). Then, summarize briefly and insightfully, in your own words, the **major issues** (three or so) **or questions** that must be dealt with in the field. Next, summarize, in a few broad categories, the **major approaches** scholars (name the most famous ones) have taken to the subject—*the basic kinds of ways they have organized the coverage of the OT material* and have written Old Testament theology books (do not just list Hasel's ten but boil them down further, considering Kaiser's and Martens' too). Make a brief comment on what you think about Kaiser's approach and what he does in his book with his view of promise. Finally, (this should be at least one fourth of the essay), give **your suggestion** for how one should deal with the issues and **organize** an Old Testament theology (not a systematic theology). How might an Old Testament theology book best be written *other than* canonically, book by book, as House does? Be sure to point out how your approach relates to the spectrum of approaches in the field? This essay is not intended to go into great detail but to be your tentative, broad, conclusions from thinking about these readings and how to teach the truths of the OT to the church.

The point is to give you a basic understanding of this subject as a field of graduate study so that you have some sense of what the scholars are doing in the literature. I also want you to think about the challenge of presenting the messages of the Old Testament books in a unified way to our people. You need not labor over the detailed points and facts in the readings. Read for the main concepts and broad outline of the history of the field. Note the key principles that must be grasped and the key contributors.

Do not use footnotes for this assignment but simply put page numbers in parentheses (with the author's last name if not already named). The length is flexible within a page or so.

### **WRITTEN WORK SUBMITTED TO ROGER COTTON**

All work for me must be typed, double spaced, with one-inch margins and the right margin NOT justified, and be proof-read. Your writing should demonstrate good, formal, clear, writing style (see handouts and Strunk and White or *Getting the Words Right*). For questions about format see Turabian 6th edition. If you need to cite a source you may choose which one of the three citation

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methods in Turabian you prefer to use: foot notes, end notes, or parenthetical. For assignments with specific readings, no bibliography is needed unless you want the professor to know about additional reading you did. If the source has been assigned, just put the last name in parentheses with the page number. The length may exceed the limit by a page or so. If you do not have it finished when it is discussed in class you shouldn't listen to the discussion. Put the following information at the top of the first page or on a title page: Name, assignment, course, my name, date. Do not put anything but the page numbers at the top of the other pages. No title page is needed for work under 4 pages. Do not use a cover, just staple it.

### **2. FOR CLASS 2:**

Goal: to experience the value of word studies properly understood and of background studies such as in biblical imagery; to grasp the big picture of the central message of the Bible in terms of key principles, concepts, and themes, as well as how to relate the OT to the NT; and to see how to summarize the message of a whole book.

#### **HAVE READ:**

- 1) The textbooks and handouts on the central message.
- 2) An article related to your project from the *Dictionary of Biblical Imagery* and be ready to share one insight from it.
- 3) Material on a significant word study involved in the theme you want to study, especially from a Hebrew concordance and from NIDOTTE.

Your choice of a theme project, due the fifth week below, (see suggested topics in handouts) must be found in all four English groupings of the OT books: Pentateuch, history, poetry, and prophets, and be approved by the professor.

#### **TURN IN:**

A 2-3 page, typed, word study (see instructions and examples in handouts and in class) on a significant word involved in your theme project.

### **FOR CLASS 3:**

Goals: to define the concepts of the Name of the Lord and the covenant; to grasp the concepts of the law, holiness, and the tabernacle functions, and to experience the understanding of the message of a whole book of the Old Testament.

#### **HAVE READ:**

- 1) the textbooks and handouts on the Pentateuch.
- 2) for the book study:
  - A) read a book of the OT of your choice (not from the Pentateuch) through in one sitting.
  - B) read the sections of the following books that relate to the book of the OT you chose: Child's *Introduction to the Old Testament*, Dumbrell's *The Faith of Israel*, House's *OT Theology*, Hummel's *The Word Becoming Flesh*, the theology sections of the

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introductions of the three best exegetical commentaries on the book, and the article on it in volume 4 of NIDOTTE.

3) Also work on your project.

**TURN IN:** a page or two of summary of the theological message and major themes of the OT book you chose with a view toward preaching the book. Include a one sentence or phrase (that is specific) summary of the theological message of the whole book, a list of major OT theological themes “preached” in the book, and a very brief, basic outline of the major divisions of the flow of thought of the book. See my example for Numbers in the handouts but expound the message a little more.

### **FOR CLASS 4:**

Goals: to outline major principles of the wisdom and prophetic literatures.

**HAVE READ:** as much of the rest of the text books and handouts as possible.

**TURN IN:** an essay of about 3 or so typed pages explaining your understanding coming out of this course of the relationship of the Mosaic law to the Christian and a summation of how you see the Old Testament relating to the New and being relevant for the believer today. Are we to do all the things the laws say? How do we decide which? What did the Old Testament mean by holiness and clean vs. unclean and how do they relate to Christians today? How does God want to speak to Christians today through the Old Testament? Give key examples and Scripture references for your main thoughts, citing book and chapter.

### **FOR CLASS 5:**

Goal: to benefit from the topical studies of the students; and to deal with the topics not covered which the students request, as time permits, after their presentations.

**HAVE READ:** finish all the handouts and the two textbooks.

**TURN IN:** A major researched application project on a theme/topic of your choice, approved by the professor. This is to be an exegetical, Biblical-theological, study for teaching in the church, with strong application for God’s people today. This must demonstrate good interpretive method including the following to qualify for an “A” grade (also see handouts about method and tools):

- A. Concordance work, mainly focusing on key Hebrew words, which uncovers all the major passages on the theme/topic in which the key Hebrew words used. Then, good word study analysis of the concepts expressed by them, including reading the articles on those words in the word books, NIDOTTE and TWOT, and other scholarly essays.
- B. Quick but accurate exegetical analysis of the meaning of each passage in the context of the message of that book, taking into account the ANE background, using the Dictionary of Biblical Imagery, biblical encyclopedia articles and other background sources, and the best, scholarly, exegetical, commentaries on each passage (usually

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about 3 or so; see my list in the handouts). Do your own analysis first before reading the scholars' opinions.

- C. Read at least one scholarly journal article related to your theme, and be sure to check any scholarly books specifically on your theme for helpful insights.
- D. Check at least the following OT theologies for anything they have that relates to your theme: Davidson, Eichrodt, Von Rad, Payne, Martens, and Dyrness (see Bibliography and library reserve books for these).
- E. Draw conclusions on what God is teaching on your theme/topic through the various passages of the Scriptures in terms of principles which can be applied to the lives of Christians today.

There are three choices for method of presentation below. *All three choices require a full bibliography of all sources consulted, not just cited, (and articles in multi-author books (like NIDOTTE) must follow 11.26 in Turabian 6<sup>th</sup> ed.). All three choices of presentation should have a strong practical relevance in the conclusions if not the whole presentation.*

### CHOICES FOR METHOD OF PRESENTATION:

- 1) Turn in a 9-12 page paper
- 2) OR Present to the professor in his office, a detailed 2-3 page outline or summary of your project to be scheduled the week of the last class.
- 3) OR Present in class the highlights in about 20 minutes of a detailed 2-3 page outline or summary of the results of your project. Copies need to be made for each class member, so if you want the professor to copy it, arrangements must be made *before* class.

For a paper the style should conform to Turabian 6<sup>th</sup> ed. with your choice of citation method: footnotes, endnotes, or parenthetical references (see Turabian 6<sup>th</sup> ed. chap. 10). An outline need not be double spaced throughout, but do **NOT** justify the right margin. Provide a title page but no cover, just staple it.

Late work may be penalized.

**Note:** A \$30.00 fee will be charged to the student's account for every grade change even if the instructor has approved an extension for completing the work. Any exception to the policy will be made by the registrar.

### GRADING PROCEDURE

Reading assignments and class participation	10%
Paper on doing OT Theology	12%
Word study	15%
Essay on the law and the OT in relation to the Christian	20%
Outline of a theme in the OT	33%
Summarizing the themes of an OT book	10%

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**SPECIFIC DATA**

Prepared by Roger D. Cotton, March 2007.