



# The Christian and New Testament Theology

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## Syllabus

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## Purpose of the Course

The purpose of this course is to introduce the student to the discipline and task of New Testament theology as a subset of biblical theology and to enable the student to take steps toward formulating his/her biblical theology of the New Testament.

## Goal of the Course

New Testament theology within the context of biblical theology is an integrative discipline that demands acute interpretive skills and insightful theological formulation, carried out with an awareness of contemporary social realities and the challenges facing Christians. In presenting a framework for further studies, the goal of this course is to encourage those whom God is calling to study His Word to take up the all-important, life-consuming task of formulating the message and relevance of the New Testament. The student will also find an excellent introduction to Christian worldview principles that are applicable to one's personal walk with Christ and ministry in the church.

## Structure of the Course

### 1. *Course Overview*

- A. In order to accomplish this goal, the student's time will be devoted primarily to confronting the issues of biblical theology within Old and New Testament contexts. Since the goal of the course is to *prepare* the student to do NT theology, and since OT theology is the key to understanding NT theology, significant portions of this course are given to the development of biblical themes out of the OT and applied to the study of the NT.
- B. Practically, this means that the course is built around *lectures* and readings that are designed to map out the biblical context and central content of New Testament theology. Pursing a biblical theology of the New Testament requires time to read the Scriptures and to think about them holistically. The lectures and reading are stimuli to that end.
- C. In addition, there will be five short, integrative *essays* ("case studies") to allow the student to interact more directly with the subject matter. The structure of this course is therefore designed to expose the student to the "raw material" needed to formulate that biblical theology of the New Testament that is so essential for the life of the Church.



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## 2. Lectures

- A. Lectures 1-6 survey the history of biblical theology in the Twentieth Century in order to provide the historical backdrop for our study. Lectures 7-24 then endeavor to provide the essential Old Testament framework needed for understanding the New Testament by presenting Genesis 1-22, the events of the Exodus, and the history of Israel as the context for the doing of New Testament theology.
- B. The focus of the lectures on the history of redemption derives from the conviction that the Old Testament is the key to understanding the New. If we do not understand the history of redemption leading up to the New Testament, we will not understand the central significance of Jesus, the centrality of the Law, the role of the Spirit, the identity of God's people, or the nature of our hope for the future. In other words, the central pillars of NT theology can only be rightly understood within the context of the history of redemption that begins in Genesis 1 and culminates with the second coming of Christ.
- C. The Old Testament thus provides the *theological timeline* and *dictionary* for understanding the New Testament. Every important New Testament theological term or concept derives from the Old Testament. Specifically, the "timeline" of redemptive history revolves around the essential biblical elements of creation/new creation, exodus/second exodus, and old covenant/new covenant, while the "dictionary" centers on the nature of the covenant structures that run throughout and undergird the Scriptures.
- D. The lectures discuss the overarching issues of New Testament theology itself: the origin and nature of sin and the Fall, God's sovereignty and human freedom, the law/Gospel contrast, the need for and contours of the New Covenant, and the significance of Christ within the history of Israel. The lectures thus focus on theology proper, i.e., the nature of God and His relationship with humanity. The thread that ties the lectures together is the covenant structure that runs throughout the Bible and is the basis of a biblical theology of the New Testament. As we will see, God's self-revelation and the relationship that flows from it are portrayed in a unified covenant structure that unfolds in terms of creation, exodus, and covenant. The lectures and textbook by Hafemann therefore focus on the history-of-redemption context of the New Testament.

## 3. Readings

- A. While the lectures focus on providing a *framework* for doing New Testament theology, the readings and case studies fill in the *content* of that theology, as well as its application. The readings concentrate on the "nuts and bolts" of New Testament theology and its relevance.



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- B. Ladd's work unpacks the way in which God has made Himself known in and through Jesus Christ as detailed in the writings of the New Testament themselves.
  - C. Piper's work models what it means to live as members of the New Covenant.
4. *Case Studies*
- A. The case studies, like the readings, deal with the *content* of New Testament theology.
  - B. The purpose for the case studies is to involve the student in specific issues that are important for the overall understanding of the message of the New Testament.
  - C. The case studies cover the issues of Paul's apostolic authority, Jesus Christ, the Kingdom of God, the Law's relationship to the New Covenant, and the Church.

## Course Texts

George Eldon Ladd, *A Theology of the New Testament*, Revised Edition, ed. Donald A. Hagner (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1993).

John Piper, *Desiring God, Meditations of a Christian Hedonist*, Revised and Expanded edition. (Sisters, OR: Multnomah Books, 2003).

Scott J. Hafemann, *The God of Promise and the Life of Faith: Understanding the Heart of the Bible* (Wheaton: Crossway Books, 2001).

### COLLABORATIVE LEARNING

Whether you sit in a traditional classroom or study from a distance, you will benefit from interaction, collaboration, and spiritual formation (ATS schools, note Standards 3.2.1.3; 10.3,3,3; 10.3.4.3). In order to meet this need in distance theological education, ITS is developing structures and resources to encourage spiritual formation and community interaction in our courses. In this course, we have included three collaborative learning features:

1. [ITS Online Interactivity Forum](#) (see course requirements) – fosters peer-to-peer interaction in a global, threaded discussion (required for all students)
2. [Spiritual Formation Project](#) (see course requirements) – fosters mentor-to-learner interaction in a mentor-guided reflection, discussion and application (required for all students)
3. [Learning Community Assignments](#) (see end of syllabus) – fosters peer-to-peer collaboration in a group approach to assignments (optional but recommended where possible)

Go to [www.ITScourses.org/interactivity/](http://www.ITScourses.org/interactivity/) for the most up-to-date ITS resources.



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## Course Requirements

1. **Lectures:** The student is required to listen to all twenty-four (24) lectures by Dr. Hafemann and at the end of the course report to his/her proctor whether or not this was completed.
2. **Reading and Writing**
  - a. Hafemann Assignment: Read the Hafemann text and prepare a **two-page response** that focuses on the author's understanding of the relationship between faith and obedience as it relates to the work of Christ under the new covenant in fulfillment of the old covenant. Due at the end of the course.
  - b. Ladd Assignment: Read the Ladd text and write a **200-word (or less) review** for each chapter (46 counting the introduction and appendix). A "chapter review" consists of the following elements:
    - 1) A summary statement of Ladd's purpose or thesis of the chapter.
    - 2) A statement or two on Ladd's arguments supporting his thesis.
    - 3) An evaluation of Ladd's arguments in light of other views and perspectives.
    - 4) A practical application of the theological issue under consideration to daily life.

The purpose of this extensive assignment is to have the student interact with the varied issues of NT theology. By doing so, he/she will have a substantial foundation to the overall development of the content of NT theology.
  - c. Piper Assignment: Read the Piper text in its entirety and respond to the study guide questions over the book. These questions are located in the "Piper Study Guide" at the end of the Learning Guide.
3. **Case Studies:** Work through **five (5) case studies**. For each study, answer the corresponding essay question. Each answer should be no more than **two (2) single spaced, typed pages**, thereby requiring answers that are well organized, concise, and to the point. The case study assignment sheets are located in the back of the student's Interactive Learning Guide.
4. **ITS Online Interactivity Forum**

Participate with other students worldwide in an ongoing asynchronous threaded discussion of two major course topics. Go to [www.ITScourses.org/interactivity/](http://www.ITScourses.org/interactivity/) to register for and enter the ITS Online Interactivity Forum. In order to get the fullest benefit from the Forum, complete the assignment **after** you have listened to *all* the lectures. Be sure to return to the forum after finishing the course to see how others respond. Follow these steps to complete the assignment:



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- ◆ Post an original answer to each question for your course (75 word min.).
- ◆ Post your response to any previous answer given to each question (75 word min.).
- ◆ Submit a document to your proctor that contains the original questions, your postings, and the postings to which you responded.

**NOTE: Please read the “Assignment Instructions” in the Forum for details.**

Objective: to develop critical thinking skills through personal interaction with the content of the course and the responses of others within a diverse community of learners.

## 5. Spiritual Formation Project

**RATIONALE:** Ministry preparation and the Christian life require more than academic exercises. Learners also need personal, spiritual formation, which involves theological reflection and critical thinking on their current practices and assumptions. This process occurs as learners engage in self-reflection and interaction in a community of learning. **With this in mind**, ITS includes in all courses a capstone project addressing these issues and facilitating interaction beyond the formal learning environment (ATS schools, note Standards 3.2.1.3; 4.1.1; 10.3.3.3).

Write a **five-to-six page reflective essay** and **interview a mentor**, discussing the spiritual impact of this course on your life. *Identify your mentor early in the course*, and submit the essay to your grader when you take the final exam. This last project should not be a summary of course content, but an application of course principles. Complete the following:

1. **Personal Reflection and Evaluation: *Reflect on the course*** – To integrate your academic studies with your walk of faith, reflect on the content of the course and evaluate your life in light of what you learned.
  - a. Follow these steps in your reflection:
    - Step 1: What **one** theme, principle, or concept in the course is the most significant to you personally? Why is it significant?
    - Step 2: What portion(s) of the course brought this theme/principle/concept to light?
    - Step 3: Think about your past. Why is it vital now for you to deal with and apply this theme/principle/concept?
    - Step 4: How should this affect your thoughts and actions, and what *specific steps* should you take to *concretely* apply what you have learned?
  - b. Write your answers to the above questions in full paragraph form. (Recommended length for this reflection: **approximately three pages**)
  - c. Give a copy of this reflection to your mentor (see #2).



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2. **Community Reflection and Interaction: *Interview a mentor*** – Since the Holy Spirit uses the input of others to guide and form His people, interview a mentor according to the following guidelines:

- a. Who should you interview? (1-3 are required; 4-6 are recommended)
1. Someone with whom you have a reasonably close relationship.
  2. Someone who is a mature Christian ministry leader (i.e. a pastor).
  3. Someone who is **not** your grader or a family member.
  4. Someone who values the spiritual formation process.
  5. Someone who is familiar with and values the subject of the course.
  6. Someone who has experience using the content of the course in ministry.

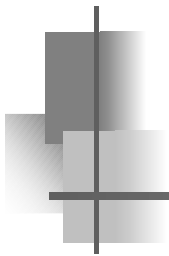
NOTE: ***Identify your mentor early in the course***, and give him/her the page entitled “Guidelines for Mentors.”

- b. Focus of the interview – Your interview should focus on the issues and questions you raise in your essay. For example:
- ◆ What feedback can your mentor give in response to your essay?
  - ◆ In light of the course content, are the conclusions you made appropriate? Why or why not?
  - ◆ What additional advice, deeper insights or broader applications might he/she suggest from his/her own life and ministry?

NOTE: Conduct this interview either in person (preferred) or over the phone. Do **not** use electronic communication (i.e. email, instant messenger, etc). Suggested length: 45 minutes.

3. **Synthesis and Application: *Draw your final conclusions*** – Having reflected on the course and the discussion with your mentor, synthesize what you have learned in these three sections:

- a. Section 1: Begin your essay with the personal reflection from #1 above. This should be exactly what you gave your mentor for the interview.
- b. Section 2: Comment on your interview, explaining what you discussed and the insights you gained from your mentor. Include the following:
- ◆ What were the mentor’s comments regarding your essay?
  - ◆ What advice did he/she give?
  - ◆ How did his/her comments expand or correct your application of the course?
  - ◆ Include the person’s name, occupation, and the length of the interview.



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- c. Section 3: Conclude with a synthesis of what you have learned. Answer the following:
- ◆ If your mentor corrected any thoughts in your “Personal Reflection and Evaluation”, how do you feel about these corrections? Do you agree or disagree? Why?
  - ◆ Synthesizing your thoughts from section one and your mentor’s insight in section two, what final conclusions have you reached? How is this different from section one?
  - ◆ In light of the interview and further reflection, what additional, *specific* changes need to occur in your life and what *concrete* steps will you take to implement them?

**NOTE TO STUDENTS:** Your effort in this assignment will determine its benefit. If by the end of this course you have not yet reflected critically on your life in light of what you have studied, allow this assignment to guide you in that process. The instructor for this course will not score your essay based on the amount of spiritual fruit you describe; so do not exaggerate (or trivialize) what you have learned. **The primary grading criteria is that you have thoughtfully considered the principles of the course and realistically sought to apply them to your life.** If you have done this and met the minimal requirements (as noted above), you will earn the full points for this assignment.

Note on confidentiality: Perhaps the Holy Spirit is dealing with you in some very personal areas of your life. Because of this, your grader will keep your essay entirely confidential and either return or discard it.

Objective: to stimulate reflection and interaction on course principles in order to enhance personal spiritual formation.

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6. **Examination:** Take the final exam, which will cover the reading, study guides, and lectures.

## Course Grading

The grade for the course shall be determined by the following:

Lectures and Hafemann Assignment .....	15%
Ladd Assignment .....	15%
Piper Assignment .....	10%
Case Studies .....	25%
ITS Online Interactivity Forum .....	5%
Spiritual Formation Project .....	10%
Final Examination .....	20%
	100%



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## Notes Regarding This Downloaded Syllabus

This downloadable syllabus is not exhaustive. It is designed to provide learners with a picture of the course, not a full outline of the course. Grader Guidelines, Appendixes, Bibliographies, Lecture Outlines, and Review Questions have been removed. The complete course syllabus is included with purchase of the course in either a digital or hard-copy format.

Likewise, individuals taking the class for credit are responsible for the syllabus requirements of the specific institution through which the course is offered. Each individual institution has reserved the right to alter or change the syllabus as deemed necessary.