



# The Christian and Old Testament Theology

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## Syllabus

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## **Course Rationale**

The Old Testament may be the central problem of theology. The problem is this: How do the people of God today relate to the people and teaching of the Old Testament, and how do they apply that teaching to life and ministry? While wrestling with this issue we must ask other important questions, such as, “How does the Old Testament relate to the New?” or “What is the main purpose of the Old Testament?” Stated practically, “What principles of the Old Testament should I be actively obeying?”

## **Course Overview**

This course considers such important questions by examining the foundational theology of the Old Testament as applied to the New Testament and the Church. The course identifies the focal point for the Old and New Testaments, and includes discussions on continuity and discontinuity between the Testaments, saving faith, the people of God, law, worship, atonement, the Kingdom of God, the Messiah, the inclusion of the Gentiles, and the New Covenant. Throughout the course, Dr. Kaiser shows how Old Testament theology is vital to contemporary Christian living.

## **Course Objectives**

*Given active participation, upon completion of this course you will be able to:*

1. Articulate Old Testament theological themes.
2. Understand the problematic issues of Old Testament theology.
3. Appreciate the significance of the Old Testament for the Church.
4. Apply Old Testament theology to life and ministry.

## Course Texts

1. Required Reading:

Dyrness, William. *Themes in Old Testament Theology*. Downer's Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1979.

2. Collateral Reading: The learner will read 1,000 pages from the following list of supplemental textbooks. *At least one book must be read in its entirety*. The reading will be assessed by an annotated bibliography. (See below.)

Hasel, Gerhard. *Old Testament Theology: Basic Issues in the Current Debate*. 4<sup>th</sup> rev. ed. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991.

Hubbard, Robert L. Jr., et al. *Studies in Old Testament Theology*. Dallas: Word, 1992.

Kaiser, Walter C. Jr. *Toward an Old Testament Theology*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1991.

Martens, Elmer A. *God's Design: A Focus on Old Testament Theology*. 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. N. Richland Hills, TX: D & F Scott Publishing, 1997.

Sailhammer, John H. *Introduction to Old Testament Theology: A Canonical Approach*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1995.

Wright, Christopher J. H. *Knowing Jesus Through the Old Testament*. Downer's Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1995.

Zuck, Roy B., ed. *A Biblical Theology of the Old Testament*. Chicago: Moody Press, 1991.

### 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.

## **Course Learning Activities**

### **Learning Activity #1 – Lectures**

Listen carefully to each of the twenty-four lectures, utilizing the lecture outline as a guide and the note-taking page for recording thoughts. You should find a quiet environment that limits unnecessary distractions.

Objective: to accumulate course content through active and careful listening.

### **Learning Activity #2 – Required reading/reports**

Annotated Bibliography – *all* reading will be stipulated and summarized in an annotated bibliography to be turned in upon completion of the course. For each reading, you will list the number of pages and a one-paragraph annotation. Remember, at least one *complete* book must be read. (See “course texts” above.)

Objective: to acquire a deeper, broader knowledge of course content and to demonstrate that knowledge through brief written assignments.

### **Learning Activity #3 – Study Questions**

Answer the study questions provided after each lecture. The answers to these questions will be turned into your proctor *before* the final examination. Participating in these questions will better prepare you for the exam and assignments.

Objective: to foster immediate and cognitive interaction with the lecture content and to encourage evaluation of where you stand in relation to that content.

### **Learning Activity #4 – Ministry Research Paper**

Write a paper (approximately ten pages) on the significance of the Old Testament for ministry in a particular area of your choice. Choose from one of the subjects below, or secure approval from your proctor for an alternative.

Objective: to apply the principles of Old Testament theology to life and ministry.

## FORMAT:

- ✓ Read the assigned book for the given topic area, and do other reading and research as needed.
- ✓ Evaluate the required book's contribution in this area.
- ✓ Formulate your personal contribution to the topic based upon further reading, reflection, etc.
- ✓ Detail some *specific* ministry plans in this area as a result of your study.

## POTENTIAL SUBJECTS:

- Worship: David Peterson, *Engaging with God*  
OR Andrew Hill, *Enter His Courts with Praise*
- Ethics: Christopher Wright, *Walking in the Ways of the Lord*
- Prayer: Patrick Miller, *They Cried to the Lord*  
OR Samuel Balentine, *Prayer in the Hebrew Bible*
- Holiness: John Gammie, *Holiness in Israel*
- Election: David Novak, *The Election of Israel*
- Justice: Moshe Weinfeld, *Social Justice in Ancient Israel*  
OR Walter Brueggemann, *Interpretation and Obedience*
- Anthropology: Hans Walter Wolff, *Anthropology in the Old Testament*
- Theodicy/suffering: Walter Brueggemann, *The Psalms and the Life of Faith*  
OR Robert Davidson, *The Courage to Doubt*  
OR Terence Fretheim, *The Suffering of God*
- Environmental stewardship: Wesley Granberg-Michaelson, *Tending the Garden*  
OR Fred Van Dyke, *Redeeming Creation*
- General: Christopher Wright, *Knowing Jesus Through the Old Testament*

## Learning Activity #5 – Evaluation Paper

Write a brief paper (three to five pages) evaluating Dr. Kaiser's proposal of promise theology in light of all your research in the course. You should suggest strengths and/or weaknesses of Dr. Kaiser's approach, and if you differ with it significantly, you should provide a tentative alternative proposal.

Objective: to articulate Dr. Kaiser's approach in your own words, and to critique that approach in light of the Scriptures.

### **Learning Activity #6 – 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 On-Line 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:

- ◆ 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.

### **Learning Activity #7 – 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).

**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.
- 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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### **Learning Activity #8 – Final Exam**

At the end of the course, you will participate in a final exam. The exam will primarily cover Dr. Kaiser’s lecture material.

Objective: to reinforce and assess knowledge of lecture content.

## **Course Grading**

Reading (as assessed by annotated bibliography).....	10%
Study Questions .....	10%
Ministry Research Paper .....	25%
Promise Theology Evaluation Paper .....	20%
ITS Online Interactivity Forum.....	5%
Spiritual Formation Project .....	10%
Final Exam .....	<u>20%</u>
Total .....	100%

# Syllabus

## **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.