Summer 2013
OT1526 Old Testament History and Theology
Professor: Dr. John Halsey Wood Jr.
Class Hours: 2

Course Description

A study of the formation of the Old Testament canon, of the redemptive history and the history of revelation, of textual criticism, of Israelite history, and an evaluation of critical scholarship. The Christ-centered interpretation of the Old Testament will be presupposed, taking into consideration the organic, progressive structure of biblical theology. Attention will be given to both the texts and contexts of the theological enterprise through a variety of interpretive methodologies. Special emphases will be placed on the nature of covenant theology.

Course Objectives

Upon completion of this course the student will:

• Understand the history and salient issues of biblical theology and OT theology.
• Be familiar with the major overarching themes of the Old Testament.
• Be able to identify key passages for doing Old Testament theology.
• Be able to explain covenant theology as an account of the relationship between the Old Testament and the New and be able to contend either for or against the covenantal interpretation of Scripture.
• Begin to integrate Old Testament theology into systematic theology.
• Understand some basic approaches of biblical interpretation, particularly the approach of biblical theology.

Core Texts and Articles


ESV Study Bible. Crossway. You need a good study Bible. If you have another version that you would like to use, please see the instructor for approval.


Pontifical Biblical Commission. “The Interpretation of the Bible in the Church”


Collateral Texts

Further Resources

Course Requirements

**Attendance and Reading.** Class attendance is required. More than two unexcused absences drops final grade one letter grade. **Reading.** All reading assigned in course outline from textbooks and Bible are required. 10%

**Memorization.** Books of OT, Gen 17:1-8, 10 Commandments + Preface, Jeremiah 31:31-34, Luke 24:44-46. Each of these passages must be memorized and recited aloud to another person twice. You must bring a signed note from another person attesting that you recited these passages on two different occasions. Due at the last class. 10%

**Papers.**

**Short Digest Papers (2).** Digest papers are summaries of the main points of the readings in your own words. Each digest should be approx 1000-1200 words. This is *not* a response paper. This is not your evaluation of the text, although you can append an additional paragraph or two that presents your take. The goal of these papers is for you to understand what the authors are saying. Digest papers are on the following two texts: 1. *Christ of the Covenants*, 3-63. 2. Ratzinger, “The
New Covenant”. The digest of Ratzinger should summarize the main points and make brief comparisons, similarities and differences to the covenant theology as presented in class and in other assigned readings. See due dates below. 20% (10% each)

**Research Paper.** A longer research paper on a biblical theological theme. See further instructions. 30%

**Final Exam.** A take-home, discussion question exam that will cover class material and readings. 30%

All course materials must be submitted by the last day of class. Thereafter, course materials may be submitted for up to six (6) weeks after the end of the semester directly to the office of the Registrar with the permission of the professor. If a student submits course materials after the end of the semester but within the six (6) weeks grace period, the student’s grade will be lowered by one letter grade. The course materials will not be accepted after the six (6) week grace period and a failing grade will be posted to the student’s transcript.

**Course Outline**

**Week 1**
Course Introduction: Principles for Interpreting the Bible and What is Biblical Theology?
Reading: “The Interpretation of the Bible in the Church” I.A, I.C.1-2, I.F, II.B; Bartholomew 15-27; Vos, Biblical Theology, “Introduction” 3-18
Bible: Luke 24, Hebrews 1

**Week 2**
Creation
Reading: Bartholomew 29-40; Robertson 67-87 “The Covenant of Creation”; Leithart 43-50 “Three Story House”
Bible: Gen 1-2, John 1, Psalm 104

**Week 3**
The Fall
Reading: Bartholomew 41-53; Robertson 93-109 “Adam: The Covenant of Commencement”; Leithart 50-57 “Junior Architects”
Bible: Gen 3-11

**Week 4**
What is a Covenant?
Reading: Robertson 3-66 “Introduction to the Divine Covenants”
**Assignment:** First digest paper due – Robertson, Christ of the Covenants

**Week 5**
Abraham, the Covenant and the Patriarchs,
Reading: Bartholomew 53-59; Leithart 58-69 “Between Babel and Bethel”; Robertson 127-167 “Abraham: The Covenant of Promise” and “The Seal of the Abrahamic Covenant”
Bible: Genesis 12, 15-18, 21-22, 24-27, 35, 37, 41-46, 50

**Week 6**
Egypt, Exodus, and Redemption
Bible: Exodus 1-16
**Week 7**  
Life in the Land, part 1: Law and Land  
Reading: Bartholomew 74-85, Leithart 78-81 “The Marriage Supper of Yahweh” and Ch 3 101-113 “From Sinai to Shiloh”  
Bible: Exodus 20-24, 31-34, Deuteronomy 29-30, Joshua 23-24, Numbers 1, 13-14

**Week 8**  
Life in the Land, part 2: Worship, Sacrifice, Tabernacle  
Bible: Exodus 25-31, Leviticus 1-9  
**Assignment:** Second digest paper due – Ratzinger, “The New Covenant”

**Week 9**  
Judges, Saul, and David  
Reading: Bartholomew 85-95, Leithart 113-128 (Judges, Ruth, Samuel), and 129-153 “The House of David and the House of Yahweh”  
Bible: Judges 2, 17-21, 1 Samuel 1-6, 16-17, 25

**Week 10**  
David cont’d and Poetry  
Reading: Leithart 153-160 “Son of David”, Robertson 229-270 “David: The Covenant of the Kingdom”  
Bible: 2 Samuel 6-7, 11-12, Psalms TBA

**Week 11**  
Wisdom, Solomon, Kingdom Decline, and Exile  
Reading: Bartholomew 95-104, Leithart 161-188 “Walking in the Customs of the Nations”  
Bible: Ecclesiastes TBA, 1 Kings 11-12, 1 Kings 17 – 2 Kings 4, 2 Kings 17, Jonah

**Week 12**  
Prophecy and Diaspora  
Reading: Bartholomew 105-112, Leithart 189-195 “The Last Days of Judah” and 215-239 “Exile and New Exodus”  
Bible: 2 Kings 18-20, 22-23, Isaiah 36-40, Nehemiah 1-6, Daniel

**Week 13**  
The New in the Old Concealed  
Bible: Jeremiah 31, John, Mark 1-3, 14-16

**Guidelines for Writing a Biblical-Theological Paper**

**Aim**  
The aim of this paper is to investigate how theological themes develop through the history of revelation, and how they come to fulfillment in Jesus Christ.

**Format**  
4000-5000 words (not including footnotes). All research papers must be formatted in accordance with Turabian Chicago standards including the title page, citations and bibliography. Any paper
not conforming to these standards will automatically be dropped one letter grade. #12 Times New Roman font and double spacing is required on all papers.

Possible topics
1. Covenant
2. Food and meals (e.g., manna)
3. People of God and/or Kingdom of God
4. Exodus and Redemption
5. Temple
6. Baptism / Water
7. Recapitulation according to Irenaeus (for church history buffs, see me for further information)
8. The Law or one particular law
If you would like to research another topic, please consult the instructor first.

Primary Resources
All of the following resources must be consulted and cited in your paper when appropriate: *ESV Study Bible* introductions to individual books of the Bible; Dillard and Longman, *Introduction to the Old Testament*; Waltke, *Old Testament Theology*; *Dictionary of Biblical Theology*. You are encouraged to also consult the “Further Resources” listed in the syllabus.

Paper Sections
1. What it meant: Pentateuch. approx. 1500 words

Choose a theological topic. Choose a passage from the Pentateuch that deals with your topic. This section of your paper should examine the theological meaning of your topic in your passage. This part of the paper should examine the “literal” meaning of the topic to the original author and audience of the passage. This section should begin by *briefly* answering the questions: Who wrote it? When was it written? And to whom was it written? The main part of this section should discuss the meaning of the chosen topic in the passage. It will be impossible to do a comprehensive investigation, so consider what aspect(s) of your topic is central to your passage and focus on that.

E.g. Gen 15. God promises Abraham that kings will come from his family.

2. What it meant: Broader OT (historical books, poetry, wisdom lit., prophecy). approx. 1500 words

Choose a second passage from the OT that deals with the same topic and preferably with the same aspect of your topic dealt with in the first section. This section should, again, begin by *briefly* answering the questions: Who wrote it? When was it written? And to whom was it written? Then, as in the first section, this section should examine the theological significance of your topic in this second passage. Finally—different than what was done in the first section—this section should additionally explain how the meaning and significance of the topic changes or is more fully explained in this second passage. Consider the different ways that the two passages deal with the topic. What are the differences? How is your topic expanded? Limited or clarified or specified? Are there possibly two different interpretations of the passage? Which do you prefer and why?

E.g. 2 Samuel 7. God further specifies his promise to Abraham and declares that the royal line will be David’s family.
3. What it means: in Christ. approx. 1000 words

This part of the paper should explain how your topic comes to fulfillment in Christ. This section examines the “spiritual sense” of the OT passage in light of Jesus Christ. One legitimate interpretive goal is the piestistic/moralist goal which answers the question “how does it apply to me?” This section of your paper is not about that. As an example of spiritual interpretation of the OT, consider how the Jesus Story Bible always brings the OT stories around to Jesus. Is there a typological relationship? How might this Christological fulfillment surprise the earlier writers and audiences?

E.g. Matt 1. Jesus is announced as the royal son in whom the promises to both Abraham and David are fulfilled. The thesis for this paper might be: I argue that in the course of redemptive history, God constantly narrows down his selection of a king for his people until the one perfectly faithful king arrives.

4. Introduction and Conclusion. approx. 4-500 words each

The introduction and the conclusion should state roughly the same thing. The introduction should state the plan of the paper: “This paper will investigate the development of the theology of . . . in the books of . . . and . . .” And the introduction should state the thesis of your paper. Your thesis must be in the form of an argument, and it must be an argument that is verifiable and falsifiable. E.g., I argue that the covenant promise of kingship is progressively narrowed through the course of OT revelation. In view of this, Jesus’ claim to kingship is a claim that this promise finally comes down to a single man, himself. It is not an argument, at least not an interesting one, to claim that God promised Abraham that kings would come from his family. That is obvious from the text. It might, however, be interesting to argue that God did not promise kings to Abraham, precisely because the text seems to indicate otherwise. That is also an argument that is potentially falsifiable. It is not an argument to claim that the promise to Abraham makes me/you feel good about ourselves. That is not easily verifiable or falsifiable.

Further Resources
John Frame on “How to Write a Theological Paper”
http://www.proginosko.com/docs/frame_theol_paper.html
Strunk and White. Elements of Style.