**What You Should Know from OT2-Old Testament Theology**

Lakeside Institute of Theology

**Week 1 – September 12, 2012 – Introduction to Old Testament Theology**

1. **What is “Old Testament Theology?”**
	1. The academic discipline that seeks to understand the meaning behind the message of the Old Testament.
2. What are some of the inherent problems facing Old Testament Theology?
	1. The Old Testament is 39 different books, written by different authors, over a 1000 year period. So should Old Testament Theology concentrate on the many books, authors, periods – or on the OT as a compiled document with a central motivation and message?
3. For all intents and purposes, when did Old Testament Theology begin as a discipline?
	1. During the 16th Century Protestant Reformation, and the emphasis on ***sola Scripture*** (“*Scripture alone*”).
4. What significant contribution did Johan Philip Gabler make to OT Theology in 1787?
	1. Gabler is considered the “Father of Modern Biblical Theology” because, in an address at University of Altdorf in Germany, he was the first to propose separating Biblical Theology from Systematic Theology.
5. What is “Biblical Criticism?”
	1. “The scholarly study and investigation of biblical writings that seeks to make discerning judgments about those writings.”
6. What is meant by “Lower Criticism” in Biblical Criticism?
	1. The study of the TEXTS of Scripture – what they say and what we can learn from the study of various versions and manuscripts.
7. What is the more modern name for Lower Criticism?
	1. Textual Criticism.
8. What is meant by “Higher Criticism?”
	1. The study of the historic origins, dates and authorship of the books of the Bible – what came before and behind the writing of Scripture.
9. What three problems have caused Higher Criticism to come to be associated with lack of belief?
	1. Leaders of the Higher Critical movement have based their theories largely on their own prior, subjective conclusions instead of approaching the task of understanding biblical origins with objectivity.
	2. The mostly-German historic leaders of Higher Criticism have seemed so preoccupied with theories that they often have seemed to lack any common sense.
	3. The dominant men behind Higher Criticism have had a very strong bias against the supernatural; i.e., miracles are not possible, predictive prophecy is not possible, and the Bible is not and could not have been divinely inspired or revealed.
10. Who was Julian Wellhausen?
	1. The late-19th and early 20th century German theologian who was the primary advocate and refiner of the Documentary Hypothesis theory of the Pentateuch.
11. What is the Documentary Hypothesis?
	1. The theory that the Pentateuch (first five books of the OT) were not written by Moses, but instead by a number of writers (at least FOUR), in different places at different times, but all much later than Moses.
12. What is the meaning of the letters J,E,D, and P in the Documentary Hypothesis?
	1. The four supposed writing sources that most Documentary Hypothesis scholars believe contributed to the Penteteuch.
		1. J – Yahwist writer (uses “Yahweh” to refer to God)
		2. E – Elohistic writer (uses “Elohim” to refer to God)
		3. D – Deuteronomist writer (responsible for the Book of Deuteronomy and some other more historic sections of Pentateuch)
		4. P – Priestly writer (concerned mostly with temple and priestly matters)
13. What are the clear prejudices reflected in the Documentary Hypothesis theory, and why do we reject them?
	1. The claim that Moses could not have written the Pentateuch because he could not write.
		1. We now have examples of writing from far earlier, including Semitic writing from Egypt at least 400 years before Moses.
	2. Differences in the text of the Pentateuch – such as different names used for God, parallel stories and differences in writing style – require the acceptance of multiple authors.
		1. Subsequent scholarship into Semitic writing has shown such variables to be quite normal, and belief in Moses as the primary writer of the Pentateuch does not preclude Moses using other sources (especially for the prehistoric prologue of Genesis 1-11), nor does it mean God could not have appointed Joshua or someone else to make minor additions later.
	3. The idea that the Torah was inspired by God must be rejected outright, along with any suggestion of miraculous events.
		1. To do so undermines all aspects of the belief system of both Judaism and Christianity, and negates any meaningful consideration of Scripture at all.
14. Which two Old Testament theologians were primarily responsible for re- establishing the discipline of Old Testament Theology?
	1. Walther Eichrodt, with his focus on “Covenant” as the central theme of the Old Testament.
	2. Gerhard von Rad, with his focus on a more dynamic historical approach.

**Week 2 – September 19, 2012 – Theology of God**

1. What was the religious environment of the Ancient Near East before Israel entered Canaan?
	1. There were many gods, from many different cultures.
2. What is meant by the statement that the ancient Israelites likely were a “henotheistic” culture?
	1. It means that while they believed in and worshipped one God, they probably accepted the existence of other deities that *could* also have been worshipped.
3. What are some of the names used for God in the Old Testament?
	1. YHWH, the proper name of God, used some 6700 times.
	2. Elohim, more generic “god,” used about 2,500 times.
	3. Adonai, “Lord,” used about 300 times.
	4. Others, including…
		1. El Shaddai, “God Almighty”
		2. El Elyon, “God Most High”
		3. El Olam, “The Everlasting One”
4. What is the meaning of God’s proper name, “YHWH,” and what is the implication of this?
	1. “I Am Who I Am” – meaning God is self-existent, independent, eternal, non-contingent, unchangeable.
5. What is meant by the “transcendence” of God?
	1. God is other than, above and distinct from all His creation.
6. What is meant by the “immanence” of God?
	1. God chooses to be near and available to His people, seeing and interacting with His creation, despite His transcendence.

**Week 3 – September 26, 2012 – Theology of Creation**

* + - 1. In what ways does the Genesis creation story differ from creation stories in other ancient cultures?
				1. Only Genesis makes no attempt to offer a “theogony” – an explanation of where God or the gods came from; the eternal existence and presence of God is *assumed* in Genesis.
				2. Other creation myths have multiple deities that fight amongst themselves, with creation being a by-product of that conflict. In Genesis there is only one God, and no conflict.
				3. All other creation myths depict the gods struggling to get control of the chaos of pre-creation and shape it into the universe; Genesis depicts God creating just by *speaking* the universe into existence, with no struggle or effort.
			2. What is ***pantheism***? What is ***panentheism***?
				1. *Pantheism* is the ancient belief (which still exists today in New Age ideologies) that everything in existence, added together, *is* God.
				2. *Panentheism* is the ancient belief (which still exists today in New Age ideologies) that everything in existence, added together, plus a little more, *is* God.
			3. In what primary way does the Genesis creation story differ from pantheism and/or panentheism?
				1. There is a clear distinction between the Creator God and His creation, so that creation is intentionally limited and is in no way infinite, eternal or divine.
			4. For what reasons do we believe God made the creation ***good***?
				1. God declared His creation good when He made everything.
				2. God gave Adam and Eve – the apex of His creation – responsibility for caring for the rest of creation, as a sign of its value.
				3. God’s own son, Jesus. Gave a positive value to creation when he willingly because incarnate into the world.
			5. For what **purposes** did God create the universe?
				1. To exhibit His glory.
				2. To serve as His temple.
				3. As a created counterpoint to His own existence.
				4. As a platform on which he could create life.
				5. As an arena in which redemption could occur.
			6. What does “**creation *ex nihilo***” mean?
				1. “Creation from nothing” – that God made everything from nothing.
			7. What are **three ways in which God created**?
				1. By divine command alone, or “by *fiat*.”
				2. By “God’s Two Hands” – meaning by working through the Son (Divine Word – John 1), and the Holy Spirit.
				3. By ministerial action – meaning He used part of creation to further create other parts (“let the land produce …”)
			8. Why is it important that we have a good Theology of Creation?
				1. Creation and Redemption form the two pillars that are fundamental to our understanding of God’s nature and of our relationship to Him.
				2. A proper Theology of Creation assures us not only that God has acted in the past, but that He continues to create and sanctify now.
				3. A good Theology of Creation is the best response to scientism and a science-based rejection of faith.

**Week 4 – October 3, 2012 – Theology of Covenant**

1. What is a “**covenant**?”
	1. A formal agreement between two parties, involving responsibilities which each party is expected to fulfill, and outlining rewards for compliance and punishments for non-compliance.
	2. In Scripture, covenants are agreements made by God with a person, religious community or with humanity in general.
2. What are **three types** of biblical covenant?
	1. **Parity Covenant** – an agreement between equals or those choosing to interact as equals, based on friendship and mutual respect.
	2. **Royal Grant Covenant** – an unconditional grant made by a king or other more senior party to a loyal servant, usually for faithful or exceptional service.
	3. **Suzerain-Vassal Covenant** – a conditional treaty between a king and his subjects in which the king allows his subjects to prosper and be protected in return for loyalty and service.
3. What are some of the **covenant agreements** we find in the Old Testament?
	1. **Adamic Covenant** – that God would provide for Adam and Eve in return for obedience.
	2. **Noahic Covenant** – God promised to Noah to never again destroy the earth by flood.
	3. **Abrahamic Covenant** – God promised to give Abram many descendants, making him a great nation, give a promised land to his descendants, and bless all peoples through him.
	4. **Mosaic (or Sinaitic) Covenant** – God promised the Israelites His blessing and a homeland in return for their worship and obedience.
	5. **Davidic Covenant** – God promised David an unending dynasty.
	6. **New Covenant** – God promises to eventually forgive and bless all people who love Him.

**Week 5 – October 10, 2012 – Theology of Fall and Redemption**

1. What is “**theological anthropology**?”
	1. The study of humanity as it relates to God; a consideration of what it means to be human in light of a belief in God.
2. **Why did God create humanity**?
	1. For his own glory.
	2. For fellowship with Him.
	3. To care for Creation.
3. What are some of the ways people **made in the image of God**?
	1. Self-awareness.
	2. Spiritual awareness.
	3. Having moral capacity.
	4. Having volition.
	5. Ability to communicate in detail.
	6. Creativity.
	7. Rationality.
	8. Trichotomous (being in three parts).
4. What is “**the Fall**?”
	1. The betrayal of God’s trust and love by our earliest human ancestors, when they willfully violated the only restriction that had been placed on them.
5. What were some **results of the Fall**?
	1. Human self-awareness became self-consciousness, learning shame and guilt.
	2. Reason was perverted; people became self-deluded.
	3. Insecurity – shown in blaming and accusation – came into the world.
	4. All human faculties became clouded.
	5. Pain and death entered the world, for all creation.
	6. Humanity became heir to not only physical death, but spiritual death.
	7. Evil entered the world for the first time.
6. What is “**sin**?”
	1. Anything in a creature which does not express, or which is contrary to, the holy character of the Creator God.
7. What is the **difference between “Sin” and “sins**.”
	1. “Sin” (capital “S”) is the condition of our souls in rebellion against God, inherited (“imputed”) from our human ancestors. (“The Plague of Sin.”)
	2. “sins” are the rebellious acts we commit which reflect the Sinful nature that is in us.
	3. “We are not Sinners because we commit sins; we commit sins because we are Sinners.”
8. What is “**original sin**?”
	1. The plague of rebelliousness against God which is inherent in all people, and which was imputed (inherited) from our original ancient ancestors following their rebellion against God.

**Week 6 – October 17, 2012 – Theology of the Law**

1. What are the various meanings the Hebrew people assign to the concept of “**Law**?”
	1. The ***Torah***, which is the first five books of the Old Testament (Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy).
	2. The Mosaic Law as *contained* in the Torah, the first five books of the OT.
	3. The Covenant agreement (Mosaic Covenant) between God and the Israelites, as articulated in the Mosaic Law.
	4. The 613 distinct commandments contained in the Torah.
2. What is the **meaning of the Hebrew Torah**?
	1. It means “**law**” or “**instruction**.”
	2. It also refers to the first five books of the Old Testament.
3. What was the **purpose of the Torah Law** being given to the Jews?
	1. To tell them how God wanted them to live, in relationship to Him and to each other, especially as they began to create a new nation after being delivered from slavery in Egypt.
	2. The Torah gave the Jews a focus that kept them together as a people, even during times of exile and oppression.
4. What is a **mitzvah** (singular) or **mitzvot** (plural)?
	1. A commandment, of which there are 613 distinct ones in the written Torah.
5. What are the six most important, or **“constant,” mitzvot**?
	1. To believe in God, and that He created all things.
	2. Not to believe in anything else but God.
	3. To believe in God’s Oneness.
	4. To fear God.
	5. To love God.
	6. Not to pursue the passions of your heart or stray after your eyes.
6. What is the “Halakha?”
	1. “The way to walk,” which is the collective body of all religious and social laws for the Jews.
7. To a Jew, what is a “sin?”
	1. Any violation of any mitzvot/commandment of the Law.
8. Why is there no longer any attempt to enforce Halakha Jewish Law around the world?
	1. There is **no Temple**, the historic center of Jewish life and social order.
	2. There is **no high court (Sanhedrin)** in existence since the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD.
	3. There are **no longer autonomous Jewish communities**, as there once were in Europe.
	4. So now all Jews are responsible only to God for obeying the Law.
9. What is the **Talmud**, and what are its two parts?
	1. **Talmud** means “**learning**,” and is the collected opinions of thousands of Jewish rabbis from 536 BC to 2nd century AD, on topics as wide as law, ethics, philosophy, customs, history, theology, lore and more.
	2. The two sections of Talmud are the **Mishnah** – the first compendium of Jewish Oral Law; and the **Gemara** – a commentary on the Mishnah and related writings.
10. What are the **Noahic or Noahide Laws**?
	1. The seven laws God gave to Noah, and which Jews believe are all that Gentiles are expected to obey in order to be righteous (as opposed to the entire 613 mitzvot in the Torah, which are only for Jews).
11. What are the **Seven Noahide Laws**?
	1. No idolatry.
	2. No murder.
	3. No theft.
	4. No sexual immorality.
	5. No blasphemy.
	6. No eating of flesh taken from an animal that is still alive.
	7. You must have laws and set up a court to maintain them.
12. As Christians, how are we to understand the Old Covenant Law and how it applies to us?
	1. Jesus released all who believe in Him from the obligation of following the ritual or ceremonial aspects of the law (dietary restrictions, holiness code, etc.)
	2. But we are still required to obey the moral aspects of the Law, which are self-evident and have not changed, with regard to our condust towards God and other people.