

New Testament Theology

(NT2)

*Wednesdays, 1-3 PM, Jan.9-Mar.6, 2012

*Required Text: Encountering the New Testament,
Walter Elwell & Robert Yarbrough- \$435 pesos

Ross Arnold, Winter 2013
Lakeside institute of Theology

Policies and Requirements

1. Classes are free, but all students seeking a certificate or degree must purchase books (paper, not electronic), which will be made available by the Institute.
2. Students in certificate or degree tracks may miss no more than one class per course, without arrangements made in advance with the teacher to make up missed work (at the discretion of the teacher).
3. Students in certificate or degree tracks will be required to take a pass/fail final exam in each course, based on study guidelines provided by the teacher.
4. Students in certificate or degree tracks must make a passing grade (based on "pass/fail") in each course in order to receive credit towards a certificate or degree.
5. Candidates for degrees (Master of Theology and Master of Theology & Ministry) must be approved by the Institute Director before final admission into a degree program.

New Testament Theology (NT2)

1. Introduction to New Testament Theology
2. Christology & Incarnation
3. Trinity (adding Doctrines of Father & Holy Spirit)
4. Ecclesiology (The Church)
5. Christian Anthropology (Being Human before God)
6. Soteriology (Sin & Salvation)
7. Eschatology (Last Things)
8. Conclusion and Final Exam

- **What can and should you expect from “New Testament Theology?”**
 - By the end of this class, assuming you attend the lectures and read the materials, you should have a good sense of the major theological themes which are contained in the New Testament, along with an Evangelical understanding of how we believe God has revealed Himself through these writings and doctrines.



What is the New Testament?

- The New Testament is the story of the earthly life and ministry of Jesus Christ (the Four Gospels), the birth and growth of the Early Church (Acts), and the development and articulation of the Christian faith and theology (the Epistles and Revelation).
- 27 Books, written in *Koine* (common) Greek, between AD 40-100, by nine different authors – Matthew, Mark, Luke (2), John (5), Paul (13), James, Peter (2), Jude, and the anonymous author of Hebrews.

What is “Theology?”

- **Theology:** the study of God (from Greek words *theo-* “God,” and *logos-* “study”). *Christian* theology is the study and effort to understand God as He has revealed Himself in Scripture.
- **Biblical Theology:** more specifically, the study of doctrines found in the Bible, arranged according to their chronological and/or historical background. (i.e., theology of the Pentateuch, or the theology of John’s writings, etc.)
- **Systematic Theology:** the division of theological doctrines by systematic categories or groupings, in order to better understand their final meaning and relevance for today. (i.e., theology of angels, of salvation, etc.)
- **Dogmatic Theology:** a form of systematic theology, used to articulate and defend the theological doctrines of a particular organized church body. (i.e., Roman Catholic dogma; Presbyterian dogma; dispensational theology, etc.)

What is “New Testament Theology?”

“The art and science of knowing and understanding what we can about God, in an organized and understandable way, through what He has revealed in the New Testament.”

While Christian Theology is based on our assurance that we can and do come to know God, there are other beliefs...

- Agnosticism – “I honestly don’t know.”
- Skepticism – “I really don’t think so.”
- Pessimism – “I’m afraid not.”
- Secularism – “I don’t think it’s important, so I really don’t care.”

One of the primary tasks of Christian Theology is to prepare us to respond to these ways of thinking and believing.

Theology is the “Queen of Sciences” – the overarching standard that should tie all other pursuits of human advancement together.

Science: “a distinct, systematized field of knowledge and an object of study.” *(Webster’s)*

- Science and philosophy seek the “I-It” truth that leads to knowledge. *(by reason & senses)*
- Theology seeks the “I-Thou” truth that leads to faith. *(by revelation... and reason and senses)*

But if theology is to have the needed impact in the world, it still must affirm reason and sense observation, just as science & philosophy do.

Brief History - New Testament Theology

- Pre-Reformation (starts 1517 AD) – Dogmatic Theology was almost all that existed.
- Reformation emphasis on *sola Scriptura*, with explosion in scholarship/commentaries.
- 17th Century Protestant Scholasticism & development of Systematic Theologies.
- 17th-18th Cent. Enlightenment, Rationalism & denial of the supernatural, incl. in Scripture.
- 1787 – Johann Philipp Gabler; separation of Biblical and Systematic Theology disciplines.
 - Biblical Theology: historical; what Scriptures *meant*.
 - Systematic Theology: doctrinal; what Scriptures *mean now*.

Brief History - New Testament Theology

- Systematic Theology continued on as before, though no longer purely Dogmatic in focus.
- Biblical Theology started pushing to discover what was BEHIND and BEFORE the Scriptures we have.
- Development of Biblical Criticism: “the scholarly study and investigation of biblical writings that seeks to make discerning judgments about those writings.”
 - “Lower Criticism” the study of the TEXTS of Scripture – what they say & what we can learn from various manuscripts & versions. (Now called “Textual Criticism.”)
 - “Higher Criticism” the study of historic origins, dates and authorship of the books of the Bible – what came *before* and *behind* the writing of Scripture.

Meaning & Concerns of Higher Criticism

- Higher Criticism is valuable and important, but has come to be associated with unbelief.
- *“No study requires so devout a spirit and so exalted a faith in the supernatural as the pursuit of Higher Criticism. It demands the ability of a scholar, combined with the simplicity of a believing child of God... But the works of the Higher Critic has not always been pursued in a reverent spirit nor in the spirit of scientific and Christian scholarship.”*

Canon Dyson Hague

Meaning & Concerns of Higher Criticism

- Three problems with Higher Critics:
 1. The leaders of the Higher Criticism movement have based their theories largely on their own prior, subjective conclusions. Examples:
 - a) Documentary Hypothesis of Pentateuch
 - b) The Jesus Seminar.
 2. The leaders (mostly German) have been so preoccupied with theories that they seem to lack any common sense.

“Their conclusions seem to the average mind to be curiously warped.” Canon Dyson Hague

“If you shut a number of men up to make study and learning the business of their lives, how many of them, from want of some discipline or another, seem to lose all balance of judgment, all common sense.” Matthew Arnold

Meaning & Concerns of Higher Criticism

➤ Three problems with Higher Critics:

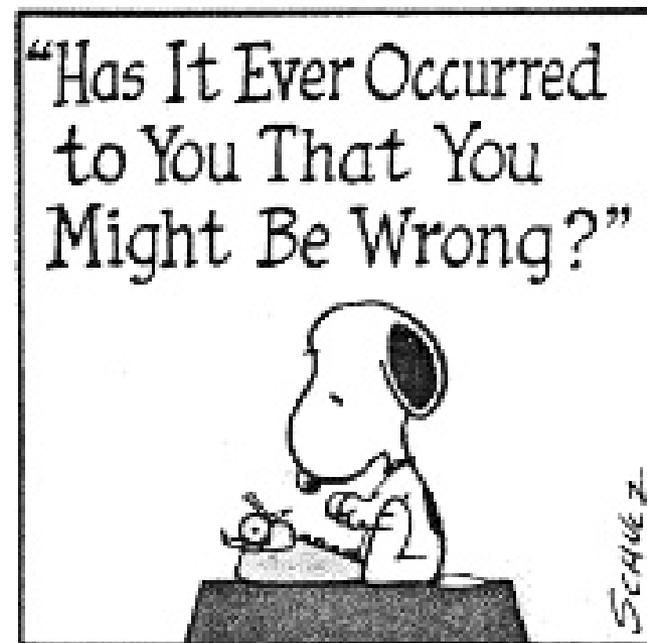
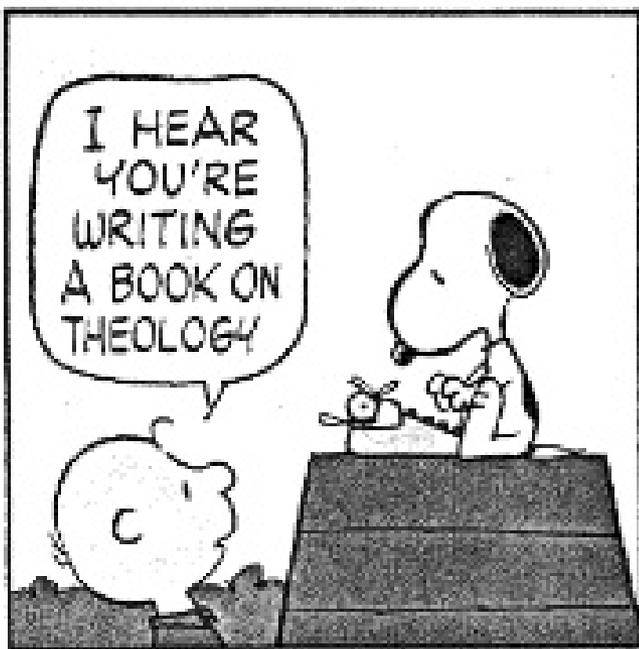
1. The leaders of the Higher Criticism movement have based their theories largely on their own prior, subjective conclusions.
2. The leaders (mostly German) have been so preoccupied with theories that they seem to lack any common sense.
3. The dominant men of the Higher Criticism movement have has a very strong bias against the supernatural.

- Miracles are not possible, so all miraculous narrative is suspect.
- Predictive prophecy is not possible, so any such statements are invalid.
- The Bible is not and could not be divinely inspired or revealed; it is an entirely human document, with human origins & problems.

Meaning & Concerns of Higher Criticism

“In one word, the formative forces of the Higher Criticism movement...were men who had discarded belief in God and Jesus Christ Whom He had sent. The Bible, in their view, was a mere human product. It was a stage in the literary evolution of a religious people. ... It certainly was not given by the inspiration of God, and it is not the Word of the living God....”

Canon Dyson Hague



“Biblical theology is neither the story of humanity’s search for God, nor is it a description of a history of religious experience. Biblical theology is ***theology***; is it primarily a story about God and his concern for human beings.

“Biblical theology therefore is not exclusively, or even primarily, a system of abstract theological truths. It is basically the description and interpretation of the divine activity within the scene of human history that seeks humanity’s redemption.”

George Eldon Ladd

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4. Ecclesiology (The Church) (*Book of Acts*)
5. Christian Anthropology (Being Human before God) (*Epistles*)
6. Soteriology (Sin & Salvation) (*Epistles*)
7. Eschatology (Last Things) (*Revelation*)
8. Conclusion and Final Exam