I. Purpose of the Course

The purpose of this course is to introduce the discipline of biblical theology and to enable the student to take the first steps toward formulating his/her own biblical theology. To this end, the course will introduce major theological themes within the history-of-redemption structure of the Old and New Testaments, with special attention to the unity of the Bible within its covenantal framework.

Biblical Theology is an integrative discipline that demands acute exegetical skills, creative theological formulation, and an awareness of contemporary social realities. This course is thus a hybrid of many different perspectives. The reading and thinking demanded in this course may therefore sometimes presuppose background that is lacking in the student's preparation. But do not despair. The goal of this course is not to create biblical theologians (something which is completely impossible in one course, let alone in a decade!), but to push us toward this all important, life-consuming task.

II. Structure of the Course

In order to accomplish this goal, the student's time will be devoted primarily to confronting the issues of biblical theology itself and to following in the footsteps of those who have attempted to formulate a biblical theology in the past, in order to learn by example. 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 biblical theology. Pursing a biblical theology requires time to think about the Scriptures holistically; the lectures and reading are simply stimuli to that end. Reading is simply the best kind of thinking - it is thinking with a pencil. The more actively one listens and reads (asking questions of the material is the key to going beyond it!), the more one will learn.

Hence, unlike my exegesis courses, the goal of these assignments is not to impart skills but to expose the student to "raw material" that will stimulate the student to use his/her own skills in the future to create the biblical theology so needed by the Church today. For this reason the assignments focus on content rather than application. This does not mean that your memory is the only tool you will need in this course. Quite the contrary! If done properly, this course will demand the hardest of all work: thinking the thoughts of an author/lecturer after him to such a degree that one can produce the product of thought, namely good questions. Each class period consequently consists of two parts: a series of lectures on biblical theology by the instructor and a discussion period focusing on the material covered in class.
We begin with a brief survey of the history of biblical theology in the 20th century in order to provide the historical backdrop for our study. We then endeavor to provide the essential old covenant framework needed for understanding the new covenant by presenting the redemptive-historical significance of the Scriptures. 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. The Old Testament thus provides the theological time line and "dictionary" for understanding the New Testament. Every important New Testament theological term or concept derives from the Old Testament. Specifically, the "time line" of redemptive history revolves around the essential biblical concept of the kingdom of God as displayed in the creation/new creation, exodus/second exodus, and old covenant/new covenant, while the "dictionary" centers on the nature of the covenant structure that runs throughout the Scriptures.

If the lectures focus on providing a framework for doing biblical theology, the readings fill in the content of that theology. Hence, while the readings concentrate on the "nuts and bolts" of biblical theology and its relevance, the lectures raise the overarching questions of biblical 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 character of God and his relationship with humanity. Again, the thread that ties the lectures together is the covenant structure that runs throughout the Bible as the basis of a biblical theology. As we will see, God's self-revelation as "King" and the relationship that flows from it are portrayed in a unified covenant structure that unfolds in terms of creation, exodus, and covenant.

Finally, as our attempt to unpack the thematic unity that emerges from this history of redemption, we will focus on "faith, hope and love" as the integrative foci of God's self-revelation, to his glory.

III. Required Textbooks and Readings

6. J. G. Vos, "The Doctrine of the Covenant in Reformed Theology" (on reserve).
7. F. M. Cross, "Kinship and Covenant in Ancient Israel" (on reserve).

Recommended Textbooks (to be read for extra credit)

Extra credit will be given for any reading done in these volumes as testified to by written notes. This reading is due on June 22nd at Noon.

IV. Course Requirements

The course requirements are substantial and although the books are at a very basic, introductory level, they nevertheless require a graduate level of reading, not simply skimming the material.

1. Complete the reading of and answer the eight (8) STUDY GUIDES on Dumbrell, Hafemann (God of Promise and the essay on the covenant relationship), Dempster, Ladd, Ciampa, Cross, and Vos.

Note: The Study Guides on Hafemann, *The God of Promise*, and Dumbrell are major assignments. The questions on Hafemann, however, are very basic and at times intentionally redundant to ensure that the most fundamental information has been ascertained (the key to pedagogy [and preaching!] is repetition). Thus, the answers should be short and to the point.

There are no study guides on most of the reading from Central Themes. One will simply verify in writing that the material has been read by the end of the course on June 22nd.

DUE DATE: THE STUDY GUIDES SHOULD BE KEPT UNTIL THEY ARE ALL COMPLETED; THEY ARE TO BE TURNED IN ALL AT ONCE ANYTIME BETWEEN MAY 25TH AND JUNE 22ND AT NOON. THEY MUST BE WORD-PROCESSED OR TYPED.

2. Take the EXAM on the lectures. THE EXAM MUST BE TAKEN IN THE LIBRARY ANYTIME BETWEEN MAY 25TH AND JUNE 22ND AT NOON. I recommend that you take it sooner rather than later.

3. Submit a SIGNED STATEMENT verifying that all of the reading for the course has been completed (the five required textbooks and two assigned essays). Partial credit will not be given for this assignment. THIS TOO IS DUE BETWEEN MAY 25TH AND JUNE 22ND, TO BE HANDED IN WITH YOUR STUDY GUIDES.

Grading: Completing the Study Guides will count 60% of the course grade. The exam will count 30%. The completed reading will count 10%.

V. Proposed Daily Lecture Schedule

1. Introduction to the Course
   Judgment: The Context of Biblical Theology

   An Outline and Prolegomena to the Doing of Biblical Theology:
   Lessons from the Creation of the World
Biblical-Theological Method and the "Lutheran" Paradigm: The Beginning and End of the Law

"Covenant Theology" as a Paradigm for Biblical Theology: The God of the Sabbath and the Covenant

2. "Dispensationalism as a Paradigm for Biblical Theology: Failed Attempts and the History of Redemption

The "One-Covenant" Structure of Biblical Theology

"Christian Hedonism" and the Glory of God as the Goal of History

The Purpose of the "Exile" and Redemption of Humanity

3. The Image of God, and the Redemptive Character of New Creation

The Nature of Salvation

From Adam to Noah and Jesus as "Second Adam(s)"

From Noah to Abraham: From Faith/Obedience to Faith/Obedience

4. The Abrahamic Covenant and the People of God

The Abrahamic Covenant and the Kingdom of God

The Sinai Covenant: Remnant People and Remnant Kingdom

The New Covenant and the Messiah

5. The New Covenant and the Church (Continued)

Justification by Faith (Apart from Works of the Law)

Judgment by Works

Summary: Where do we go from here?
VI. The Course and the Master of Divinity Goals

NT 553 is designed to meet the goals of the M.Div. degree in the following ways:

1. To gain competency with the biblical languages in order to develop exegetical and hermeneutical skills using the Hebrew text of the Old Testament and the Greek text of the New Testament (1): As an English-Bible based course, this elective does not focus on this goal, though there will be continual references to the biblical text.

2. To understand the basic content and themes of the Old and New Testaments in their historical and cultural settings, (1) as well as the historical and theological dimensions of the Christian faith (2): Meeting this goal is the primary purpose of this course; the understanding and integration of the unity of the OT, read from the perspective of the history of redemption, focuses on the biblical-theological dimensions of the Christian faith.

3. To expound and proclaim effectively the biblical message of redemption (3): The biblical message of redemption cannot be effectively expounded without the kind of integrative and history-of-redemption perspectives developed in this course.

4. To develop skills appropriate for church leadership as a pastor, teacher, counselor, evangelist, chaplain, church planter, missionary or other role as a leader (3): The centrality of the Bible for ministry is underscored and strengthened by this course.

5. To foster love for God and his word and therefore to cultivate the practices of spiritual maturity and Christ-like character, and to understand the Christian’s ethical responsibility in church and society (4, 5): One of the central themes of the course is the way in which faith expresses itself in ethical and moral transformation and responsibility (love). The course thus provides a theological and exhortative framework for meeting this goal.

6. To acquire a biblical perspective and Christian worldview on the forces in our culture and to learn to engage those as they are at work both outside and inside the life of the church (5): Class lectures will repeatedly raise the implications of the Scriptures as a whole for contemporary culture.

7. To develop a global vision for the Christian faith so as to foster an appreciation and commitment to the worldwide proclamation of the gospel (6): The culmination of the course is a study of the biblical purpose and mandate for witness, which thus occupies the highpoint of the course.

8. To cultivate an appreciation for and a commitment to the personal and community sharing of the gospel (6): The life and purpose of the people of God as a people (community of faith/witness in the midst of the world) is one of the central themes of the course.