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QUESTION ONE: The New Testament Theology is the title of some academic syllabi (courses). Does it exist?

Yes, New Testament Theology, as a title of some academic syllabi, exists. However, over the years and till recent times, the discipline of New Testament Theology has been preoccupied with the quest to articulate a unifying narrative structure of the New Testament message, while simultaneously taking account of the unique contribution of each New Testament document (the theme of unity and diversity).

This points to the necessity of the discipline of New Testament Theology, amidst the debate surrounding the discipline. On the one hand, scholars, like Howard Marshall, Frank Thielman and Frank J. Matera, argue that there exists a core of theological unity; a fundamental unity, amidst the diversity evident in the New Testament canon. On the other hand, some other scholars present an opposing argument to dismiss the necessity of New Testament Theology. For Heikki Räisänen and Thomas Hatina, the so-called “issue of unity and diversity” is a non-issue, since a unified New Testament Theology is neither desirable nor even possible.

For us, therefore, just as Wendel Sun opines, the unity and diversity of the Theology of the New Testament should be upheld without overemphasizing one against the other; and this implies that we should account for the historical settings and unique contributions of individual New Testament authors (this helps deal adequately with the New Testament theological diversity), while accessing the canonical relationships between New Testament documents to understand

accurately the overall narrative and theology of the New Testament. This also covers the adoption of a thematic approach and the presentation of the theology of the New Testament in relation to the Old Testament so as to produce a work that is essentially a whole-Bible biblical theology, while focusing on the New Testament, as G. K. Beale suggests.

Now, we agree that New Testament Theology exists as a discipline. However, there is no consensus among modern scholars with regard to the center of New Testament Theology. The suggestions of many scholars include: anthropology, salvation history, the justification of the godless, the theology of the cross, the kerygma, and the kingdom of God and covenant. Also, some of the methods or approaches used in this study include the Dogmatic approach, the Chronological approach, the Kerygmatic approach, the author by author approach, round table approach and topical approach.

To reiterate, Yes, New Testament Theology exists as an academic syllabi or discipline. Amidst the obvious diversity in the New Testament, there is unity; there is the one author behind the New Testament writings – that is, the Holy Spirit. The breath of God is evident in the writings, and this gives the unity and makes it one New Testament and one New Testament theology.

QUESTION TWO (A): The Importance of the Old Testament for the Theological Study of the New Testament

The Holy Scriptures (the Old and New Testament) is the Word of God written to humans, by humans who were under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit; that is why we say, the books of the Scriptures have God as their author. The Holy Scriptures is God's self-revelation to humanity; and from it, we see God's wonders in creation and through our salvation, and a glimpse of the eternal glory. Hence, Sacred theology rests on the written word of God, together with sacred tradition, as

its primary and perpetual foundation. By scrutinizing in the light of faith all truth stored up in the mystery of Christ, theology is most powerfully strengthened and constantly rejuvenated by the Word. Thus, the Word of God is truly the soul of sacred theology.

Biblical Theology, as defined by Eugene H. Merrill, is “the history of salvation a step at a time throughout the Bible, allowing the history to take whatever form appropriate at any given stage of revelation, recognizing how the doctrine developed as revelation progressed.” Thus, from the Old Testament through the New Testament, we see the flow of the history of salvation: from the creation of man, to his fall, and then to the attempt of God to save man, culminating with Christ’s suffering, death and resurrection, and the breathe of new hope. As Augustine would say, the “New Testament is concealed in the Old Testament, and the Old Testament is revealed in the New Testament.” Truly, Christ came to fulfil the prophesy hidden in the Old Testament.

This, however, shows the Importance of the Old Testament for the Theological Study of the New Testament. Some other necessity and importance include:

- In the Old Testament God reveals himself as YHWH (Yahweh), the Father of Israel, and in the New Testament, we see Him as the Father of Jesus. Thus, we see the continuum of revelation, from the Old Testament through the New Testament.
- The New Testament writers had familiarity with the Old Testament, and depended heavily on them, since God revealed Himself to the Prophets and writers of old.
- Without making allusion to the Old Testament, the central claims of the New Testament authors in matters of faith and praxis; such as, love, charity, resurrection of the body, would not exists as it is.
- The Old Testament contains the revelation and prophesy of the New Testament; thus, an in-depth study will make this bare.