

THEOLOGY III FIRST SEMESTER EXAMINATION ON NEW TESTAMENT THEOLOGY

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- (1) **“The New Testament Theology” is the title of some academic syllabi (courses). Does it exist?**

Yes, it exists. New Testament theology is the exposition of the New Testament grammatical, historical and cultural terms. The expression itself could be employed to cover the entire period from Christ's inauguration of the New Covenant to the consummation of the redemptive program in the future, thereby setting in more adequate perspective the seeming disparity between the thousands of years of OT history and the scarce one hundred years of the life of Jesus Christ and the apostles. **The Nature of NT Theology.** As a discipline, NT theology is one segment of the larger enterprise called theology, which seeks to trace the origins and growth of Biblical teaching and to set forth the various types of doctrine apparent in the different writers. New Testament theology and Biblical theology could be classed among the traditional departments of theology; though at the same time they belong essentially to the department of exegetical theology, for their primary task is to furnish a correct grammatico-historical explanation of the teaching of each Biblical writer and to clarify as far possible the genesis and development of each distinct concept in the canonical Scriptures. Once more, New Testament Theology exists, just that some scholars prefer to call it biblical theology, why others chose to ignore the word “NTT” and make use of Systematic theology while some prefer some other names, but one clear thing is that, NTT exists, and it is a name to some academic courses. However, despite the fact that it belongs to the department of exegetical theology, it is not to be equated with any one of these per se, for it endeavors to go beyond these to explicate the origins and development of distinct concepts within the NT in historical terms. On the other hand, it differs from systematic theology not in being more Biblical in product, or adhering more closely to the truths of Scripture, but in its principle of

organizing the material with which it works in historical rather than logical fashion.¹ Finally, at this juncture, we can affirm that NTT exists in some academic syllabi (courses), but we cannot find the word “NTT” in any part of the Scripture. Even when it is assumed that a theology is contained in the New Testament, there is no agreement on where in the New Testament such a theology is found or whether it contains a single theology or more than one.² Meanwhile, some scholars have proved the existence of the NTT in their publications, however, the structure might differ. For example, Schnelle’s overall structure is unique as well in that it deals with historical, thematic, and theological concerns in the context of a modified book-by-book analysis. He takes this approach because he notes, “Jesus of Nazareth is the basis and beginning point of all NTT theology”.

(2) Essential aspects of the Eucharist in the New Testament.

The Eucharist, also known as Holy Communion and the Lord’s Supper, is a Christian rite that is considered a sacrament in most Churches, and an ordinance in others. However, according to the New Testament Bible, the rite was instituted by Jesus Christ during the last supper as we see in the Gospel of Luke 22:19-20 which reads: “ He took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to them saying, ‘this is my body given for you; do this in remembrance of me’”. In verse 20, He did the same with the cup after supper, and said, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood poured out for you”. In other words, through the Eucharistic celebration, Christians remember both Christ’s Sacrifice of himself on the cross and His commission of the apostles at the last supper, hence he commanded His disciples to ‘do this in memory of me’ while referring to the bread as His body, and the cup of wine as His blood.

¹ <http://www.biblegateway.com/resources/encyclopedia-of-the-bible/New-Testament-theology>

² Cf. Hendrikus Boers, *What is New Testament?* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press 1979), P.10-11.

Hence He bids us; “as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death till he comes” (I Cor. 11:26). In other words, whenever we partake in any Eucharistic celebration, we “proclaim the Lord’s *saving* death”, for the Eucharistic action implies an interpretation of the fact of Christ’s death, the interpretation which, we have suggested, had been first perceived and taught by Jesus himself. In the simplest and most straightforward sense of the word “Eucharist”, implies “remembrance” of Christ.³ It recalls the days in Galilee when, as head of the *haburah* of fellowship of the disciples, Jesus broke bread for the group. It also recalls the lakeside meals when Jesus broke the bread for hungry multitudes on those memorable “guest-nights” of the *haburah*, when he spoke about the bread from heaven. However, the Eucharist is rooted in time and space; it is recognizable as the Lord’s Supper because the same Jesus is host at the Church’s Eucharist as He was host in the *haburah* of the disciples: ‘He was known of them in the breaking of the bread’ (Lk. 24:35). It is therefore forever a witness-a memorial.⁴ Finally, there is a great difference between modern psychological conceptions of memory and the biblical notion of “remembrance.” The bible takes a more realistic view of memory. Biblically, when we remember something from the past, we do not merely entertain a pale idea of it; we actually make it present again. That is why God’s remembrance of someone is always active for mercy or for judgment; it is never a neutral memory, like a mere idea in the mind. Again, to remember someone, in biblical language, means to be gracious unto him (cf. Lk. 23:42,). However, the Eucharistic anamnesis is primarily a divine and not human remembering. Meanwhile, the above points buttress the fact that when we remember the past, we make it present. It is no longer the dead-and-gone past, but it is the past which is even now present again and active for our salvation.

³ Cf. Alan Richardson, *An Introduction to the Theology of the New Testament* (London: SCM Press Limited, 1961), P.364

⁴ Cf. Alan Richardson, *An Introduction to the Theology of the New Testament*, P.365