

**DOMINICAN UNIVERSITY SAMONDA**

**FIRST SEMESTER EXAM**

**NEW TESTAMENT THEOLOGY**

**By**

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**DI/892**

**QUESTIONS**

**MANDATORY QUESTION**

**“THE NEW TESTAMENT THEOLOGY” IS THE TITLE OF SOME ACADEMIC SYLLABI (COURSES). DOES IT EXIST?**

**OPTION “E”**

**THE KINGDOM OF GOD/ HEAVEN AS A COMMON THEOLOGICAL THEME IN THE SYNOPTIC GOSPELS**

**Q.1)** is it possible to arrive at one NT Theology? According to Christopher Rowland and Christopher Tuckett; have one Theology does not mean that all the NT authors must say the same thing. Have one theology means, that all the authors say complementary things but also in different ways. Diverse authors with diverse backgrounds each writing for a particular audience to address a particular problem (in most cases) can they be having the same theology? It must be noted that this problem is not unique to NT Theology at much larger scale attempts have been made to arrive at one biblical theology. NT Theology is a historical discipline i.e. it focuses on how within the NT and even within a writer's works themes have evolved and how the particular historical context influences their writings. New Testament books focus on the figure of Jesus precisely because he is the new element in the situation. New Testament authors were not concerned to write a systematic 'theology', but were reacting to the life, death and resurrection of Jesus, whom they believed to be God's Messiah or Christ.

The question of unity and diversity of the NT has been an object of debate and contradictions for many scholars. Thomas R. Schreiner in his book, *New Testament Theology: Magnifying God in Christ*, Schreiner opts for a thematic approach, arguing that this will aid in understanding both the overall unity of the NT and the individual contributions of its authors. Schreiner argues that "NT theology is God-focused, Christ centered, and Spirit-saturated, but the work of the Father, Son, and Spirit must be understood along a salvation-historical timeline; that is, God's promises are already fulfilled but not yet consummated in Christ Jesus. Starting from Christian proclamation of the gospel kerygma Dunn argues that there was no common kerygma challenging the C.H. Dodd's conclusion in *Apostolic Preaching and its Developments*. If we speak about a common kerygma we must also speak about the differences. While his conclusions are correct we must remember that each sermon had some common elements. Jesus was the

common element in all of them. Of course depending on the circumstances and the environment they customized their message from this common pool of kerygma

We have looked at the various challenges that come in going for a NT Theology. However we have concluded that while there are diversities due to various reasons, leitmotifs, emphasis, audience and even personal experience of the authors there is one single NT Theology. Putting it in another way within the one NT Theology there is a lot of variety due to various reasons which doesn't disturb the unity of the NT theology. There are no controversies in the scriptures. That is because on the final analysis all scripture, be it Paul's writings or James's writings is God breathed. There is the one author behind all this, the Holy Spirit. The breath of God is in them. This gives the unity and makes it one NT and one NT theology.

### **OPTION E**

The term "Kingdom of God" has a number of variants, namely, "the kingdom of Heaven", "the kingdom of the father", "the kingdom of the son of man". The synoptic gospels make apparent that the kingdom of God is a central to Jesus teaching. The expression "kingdom" occurs four times in Matthew, fourteen in mark, thirty-two in Luke and four in John. A first glance, it might appear Matthew does not use the phrase often, but there are notices that Matthew uses the expression "kingdom of heaven" thirty two times. When "heavens" is used in the singular without the term "earth" or its equivalent nearby, it usually refers to the sky (Mt 16:1-3, 6:26). The plural "heavens" on the other hand typically refers to the invisible divine realm (Mt 3:16-17, 5:12). However the expression "kingdom of heaven" focuses on the truth that god's kingdom is from above and its shows his sovereignty and rule over all other kingdoms and all other so called gods.

Consequently, Matthew Gospel do not speak only of the “ kingdom of heaven” or the “ kingdom of God” for the word ‘ kingdom” occurs alone eighteen times in Matthew, four times in Mark, twelve’s in Luke and twice in John. So, it is very clear, then that the kingdom of God is a central theme in the first three gospels. There are passages in the Synoptic Gospel which suggest that in Jesus the kingdom had already come and was a present reality in his ministry. The stories of Simeon and Anna from Luke 2:25-35, 36-38 as examples that the restoration was happening. In the story of Jesus healing a mute from Luke 11: 14-18 where he was accused of casting out demons by Beelzebul, Jesus answered by saying that “the kingdom of God has come upon you.” In this, Jesus “saw in his healing of the demoniacs a proof that the Kingdom of God had in fact com in his ministry.” Also the parable of the sower from mark 4:19 as evidence of the kingdom as present reality, saying “here the kingdom of God is being (in the present), and already both rejection and fruitfulness are evident.” In Luke 17:20, Jesus is asked by some Pharisees when the kingdom would come. He replies by saying that “the kingdom of God is in the midst of you.” There are more numerous passages describing the kingdom as a future reality. In Luke 11:2, Jesus teaches his disciples to pray saying “your kingdom come.” The future coming of the kingdom is linked to the final judgment, such as Matthew 7:21-23 and Luke 13:22-30.

The importance of the kingdom of God in Jesus teaching is also apparent by the location of the saying about the kingdom. For example both Matthew and Mark introduced Jesus’ teaching ministry with saying about the kingdom of God. “From that time Jesus began preach, saying repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand” (Matt 4:17). The importance of the kingdom is also attested by the summary that epitomize Jesus’ ministry. “And he went through out all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and preaching the gospel of the kingdom and healing and proclaiming the goodness of the Kingdom.